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Skylark

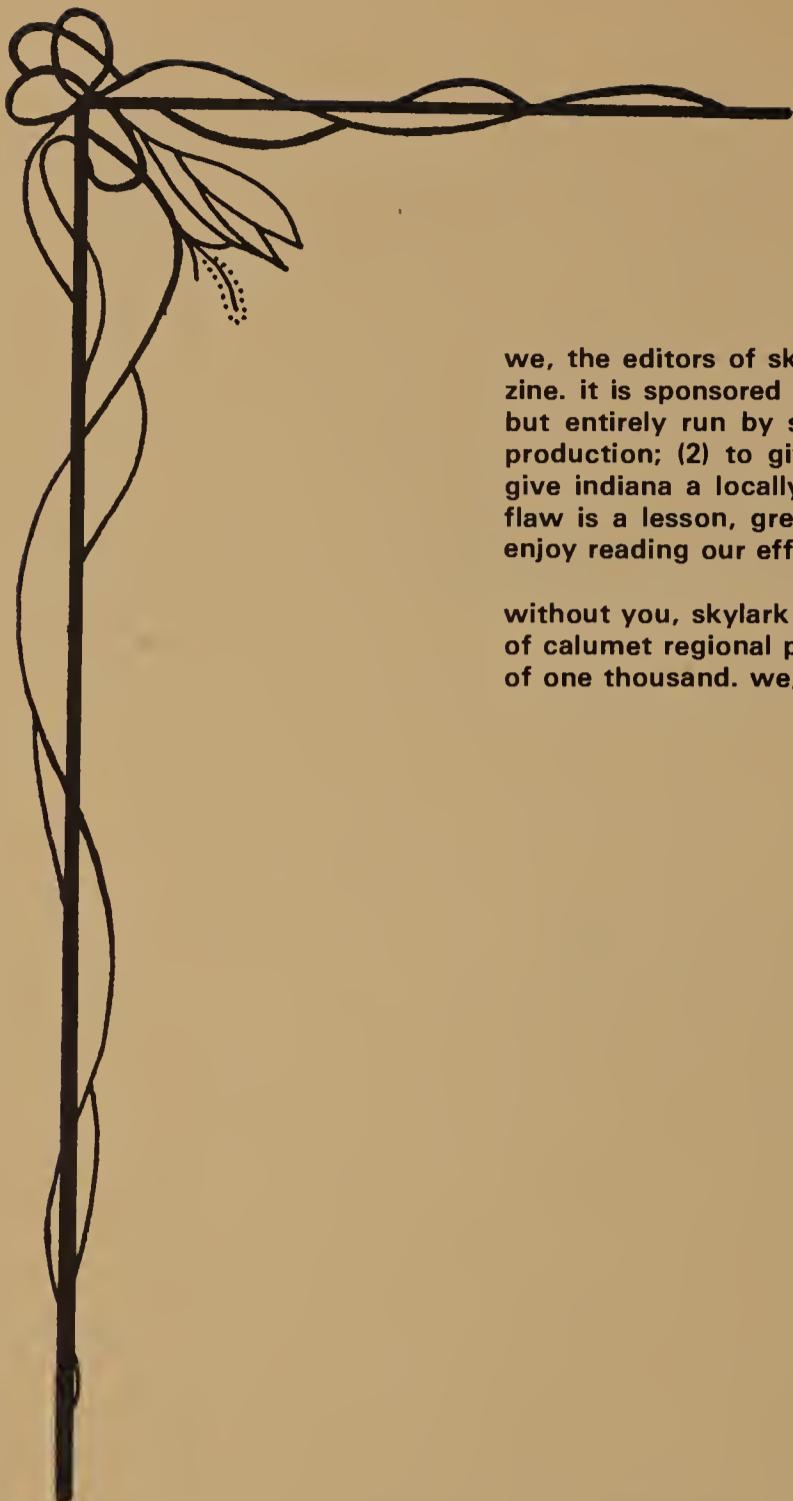
1977



Skylark

1977





introduction

we, the editors of *skylark '77*, would like to introduce you to the sixth annual edition of our magazine. it is sponsored by charles b. tinkham, english professor, of purdue university, calumet campus, but entirely run by students. *skylark*'s aim is three-fold: to give students experience in magazine production; (2) to give a variety of artists and writers local exposure; and (3) most important, to give indiana a locally created, quality literary magazine. this magazine is not flawless. each found flaw is a lesson, greater than any individual english professor could teach. we hope that you will enjoy reading our effort, as much as we have enjoyed working on it.

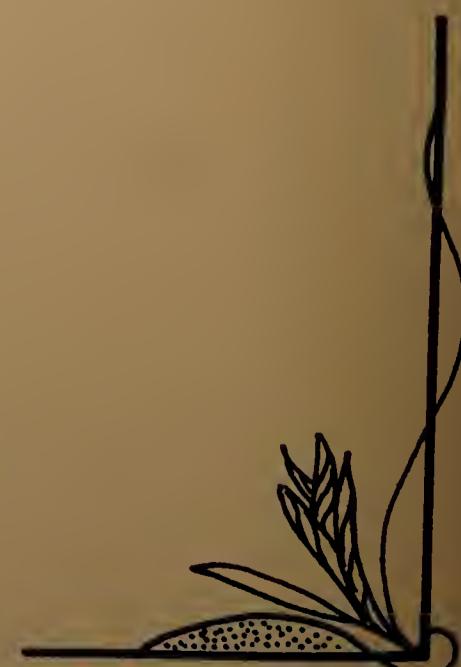
without you, *skylark* could not exist. our funds are extremely limited, and without the contributions of calumet regional philanthropists, and your support, we could not continue our current circulation of one thousand. we, the editors, wish to dedicate this edition of *skylark* to you, the reader.

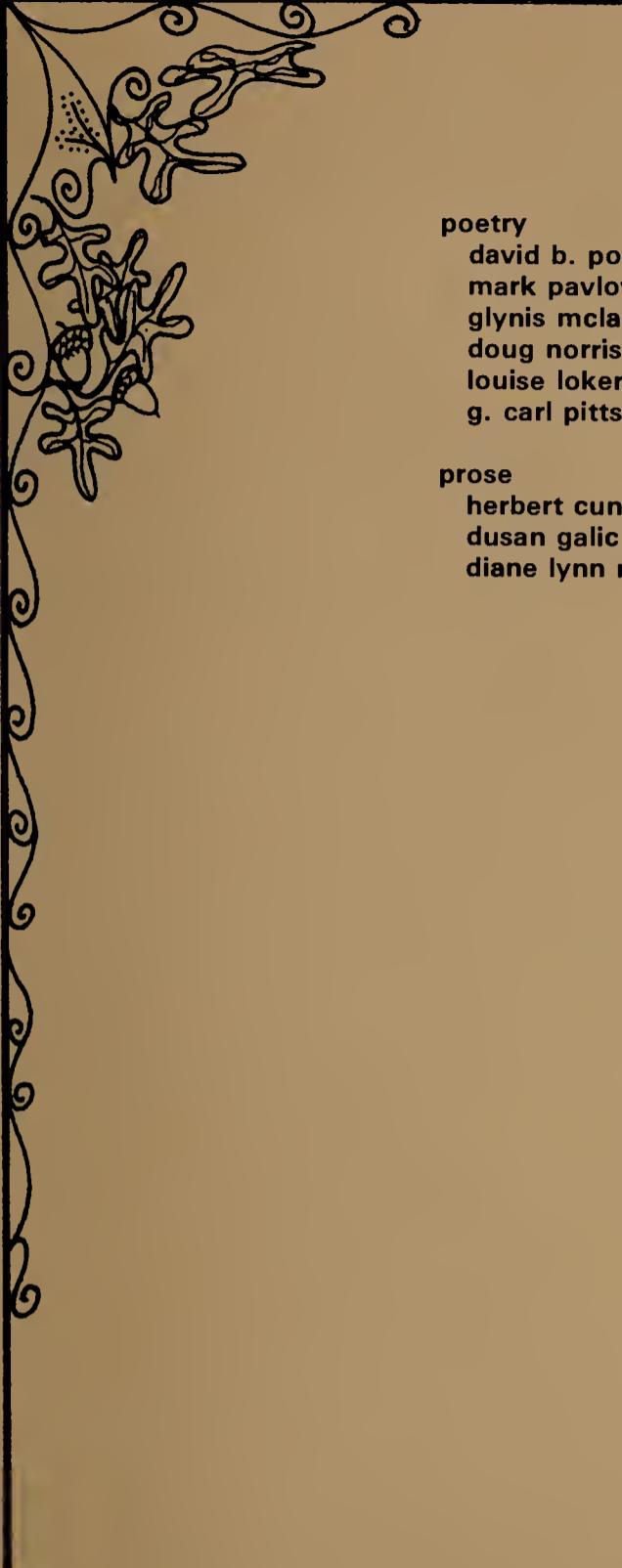
thank you,

David B. Porter
Herbert Cunningham
Greg Markey

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special thanks to: bonnie thielen and donita ericksen

1977 awards

the following have won prizes in skylark 1977 and sigrid stark 1977

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2. linda preston, "a teacher of songs", p. 8 and "images in the style of William Carlos Williams" p. 41
3. lou balch (o.c. upanti), "lactrodectus mactans.", p. 7 and "congratulations on your excellent impersonation of a human being", p. 12.

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2. irene c. bemberista, "the geriatrics of mr. benson", p. 25
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1. ruth deal, p. 50
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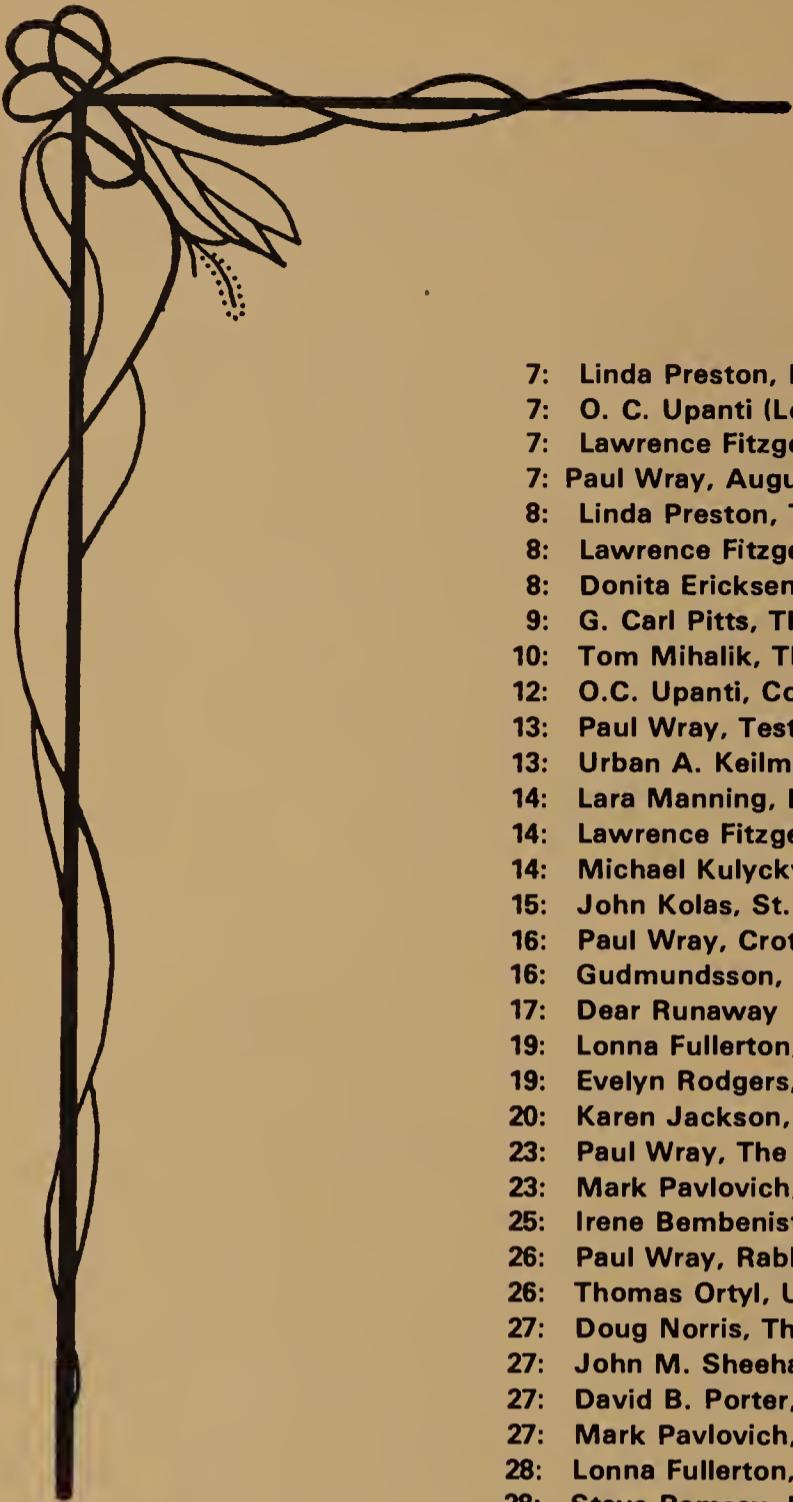
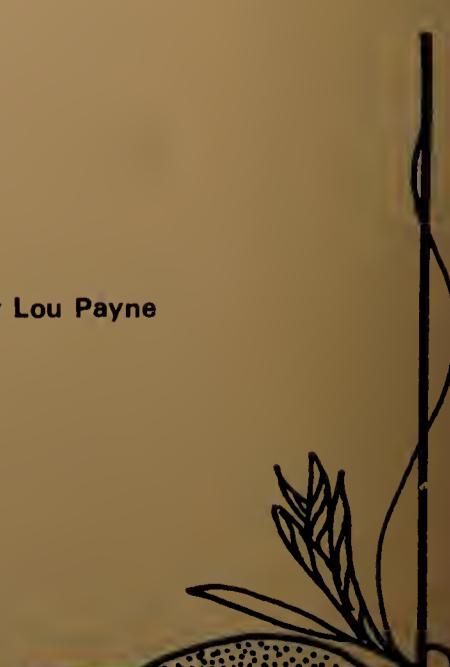
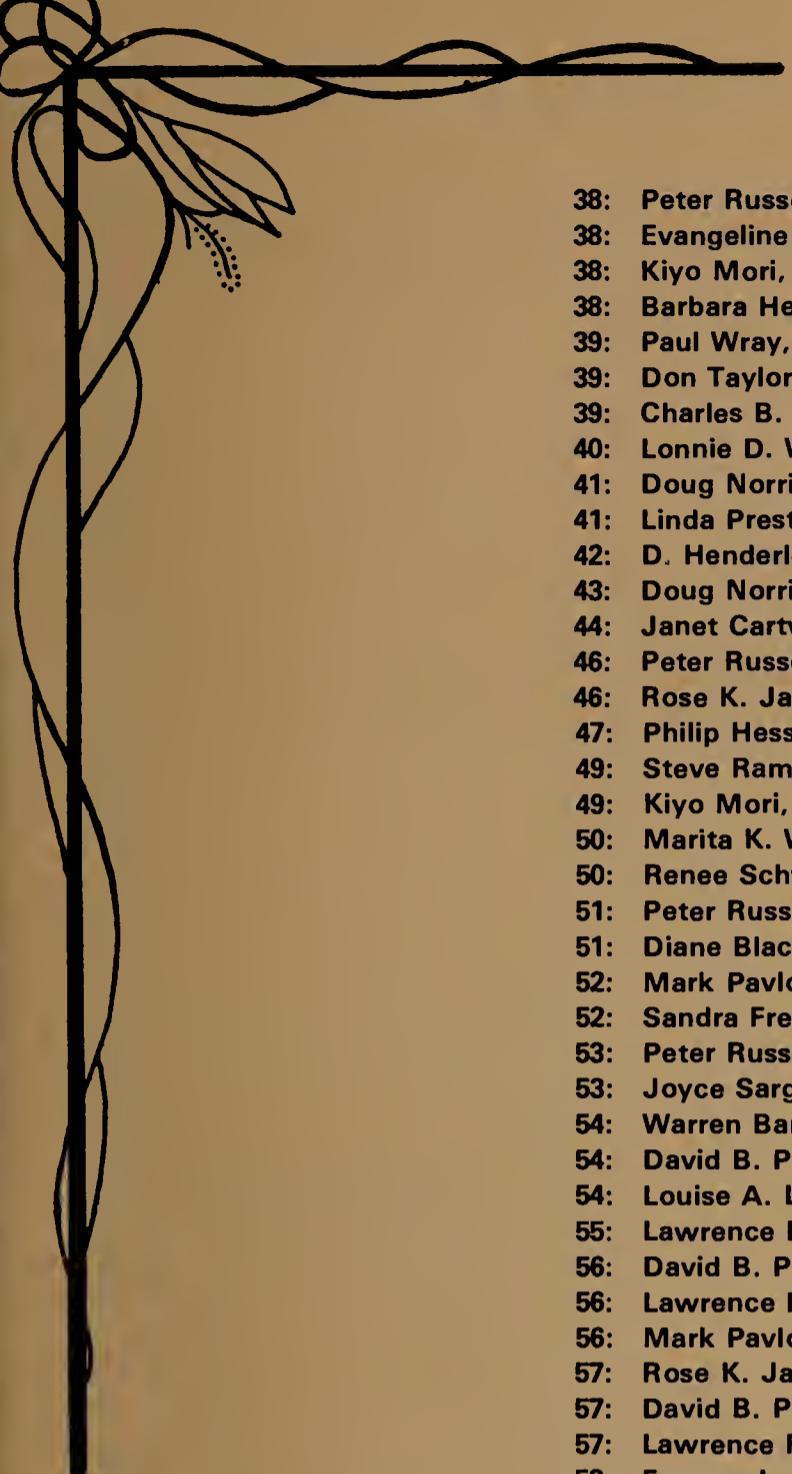


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BENEFACTORS

Calumet National Bank – Nine (9) Convenient Locations

Calumet Campus Shop – Library Building

Scott's Office Supply – 2205 169th Street, Hammond

Ribordy Drugs – 9626 Cline Ave.

Metamorphosis

Documents hang on the walls,
Bear witness to moments of pride:
The marriage certificate, legal,
Reminder of the happiest day;
Two notices of live births, stamped
With the prints of infant feet;
Kindergarten, grade school, high school
Diplomas; congratulations—these
For promotions and service
Faithfully rendered. My name
Disappears in this line-up of living.
The simple black frames, chosen
To highlight but not detract,
Have become mourning bands,
Mute witnesses to the death
Inside.

Linda Knight Preston

Lactrodectus mactans

black widow lady (spider lady)
you spin your lustful web so well
'tis there your secrets shall remain
there's no one living left to tell
of how the morning dew doth glisten
shone so brightly by the sun
as you begin your body rhythms
and play the games you've always won

your suitors enter willingly
of this there is no question
but all that e'er remains of them
is a bit of indigestion

so throb away milady fair
i'll forgo your vain insistence
though i'll gaze upon your curious games
albeit from a distance

O.C. Upanti (Lou Balch)

glancing
back,
already
my tracks
filled!

Lawrence Fitzgerald

AUGUST 2

the orange evening drips through
the open window like moist butterflies
My mouth is wet and sweet and tart
like the smell of wintergreen and cranberries
as my quivering hands drop my clothes
like limp invitations

I turn from him, nervous
He smiles
I turn to him, naked

in evening clothes and gloves
He's a priest of foggy mornings
I take his hat and loosen up his tie
He changes, now
not priest of fog
but man of sun

We kiss
My lips are dark
His lips are grass
My eyes are white wind
His eyes are deep wells
We kiss again

and now a silent word
and now a spoken touch
He opens me and
reads me as i am

now he begins undressing
and asks me to read him, too
and "when he takes off his gloves
soft ashes fall from his hands"
I wrap myself in him, and he in me
and for moments brief and mute

Our lips are dark and grass
Our eyes are wind and wells
Our hands are ash and glove

Paul Wray

TO A TEACHER OF SONGS

Thy joy, oh singer of songs
That echo voices long
Silenced beneath gray Roman stones,
Livens even dismal moans

Of despairing hope and feathers
The glad songs with wings
Renewed by spirit blithe that gathers
Similes on a pearly string.

Thy joy transfigures every note
As sun through stained-glass
Windows rainbows every mote
Of dust that dances past,

Or as the gentle wind that sketches
Motion into leaves that glimmer
Silver when wind-blown light catches
The last glory of September,

Of as the honied nectar stored
In labyrinthine caves of comb
Teases to hunger the palate bored
By unsweetened fruits of Rome.

Thy joy brings sound to the maiden's song,
Beholds the glowworm in its hidden dell,
Reflowers the rose deflowered long,
And frees the poet from his lonely cell.

Singer, even the skylark cannot teach
So well as thy incarnating joy
That brings within the listener's reach
Thoughts from beyond the mortal shore.

Linda Knight Preston

weary
of winter,
snow shifts
beneath
my feet

Lawrence Fitzgerald

The Memories of the Children

In the summer
of our yesterday
we captured
fat, green grasshoppers
in crystal prisons
with brailed lids
swung to heaven
and back
floated dreamily
in chlorine pools

and the music
of the ice cream man
was the only thing
we answered . . .

And in the summer
of our yesterday
we slid down
the viaduct
on cardboard
skinning our knees
on the stones
at the bottom
and played
red green red yellow
sky blue waters
mother may I
hide-and-seek

and the music
of the ice cream man
was the only thing
we answered . . .

And in the summer
of our yesterday
we bought candy
with our shiny pennies
and climbed cloudward
through green ladder trees
and tried to run
between the raindrops
of a summer shower
or created our own storms
with spinning sprinklers

and the music
of the ice cream man
was the only thing
we answered . . .

Donita Erickson

The History of the American Cowboy

Hank was a hardheaded cowpolk. Every day at sunup he would go out a punchin cattle. Sometimes from Texas all the way to Wichita. His life was hard and lonely out on the prairie. Sometimes he would dream about the dancehall girls in Dodge City. Every night he would dream under a dreamy sky.

Chet was a dreamy West-World hero. He rode a white horse and he had his own wagon train. Chet was a brave man, all the cowboys knew it, all the cowgirls too. One time he got two injuns with the same shot. But he was so clever he scarcely ever had to shoot—he could speak in injun lingo, read injun smoke signals, smoke the peace pipe with the injun chiefs—they all called him "Big White Father." When in California he would go buggy riding every Sunday with Miss Dolly.

Undershirt Merdoc was a rip-roarin bad man from the badlands. He was a rustler and he was a robber and he was a drinker and a gambler and a cheater and a liar and a fighter. A bounty hunter too. He hung out in Mexican border towns, sold guns to the Apache, drank tequila, and when there was a sandstorm he would curse and chase tumbleweeds. He was lynched one day in Reno.

Roy drove a pickup truck around Albuquerque. Every day at sundown he would go out a drinkin and a drivin round. Sometimes from Albuquerque all the way to Juarez. Su vido fue hard and lonesome al desredo. And in a Mexican saloon dansen aqui no es interdido. Sometimes he would meet an airplane just north of the border and haul a big package to Albuquerque and sometimes farther. Every night he would dream a drifter's dream of small towns and sand.

Randy was a dreamy sand-haired drifter. He rode a white horse and had his own film studio in Hollywood. Randy was an impressive fellow, all the cowboys said so, all the cowgirls said so too. One time he cleaned out a whole saloon full of Mexican bad guys, single handed. But he was so eloquent that he scarcely ever had to use force—he could speak all the rodeo slang (as well as fluent Italian), read political slogans, sing cowboy songs with Merle Haggard. Even the renegades liked him because he would let them work on his daddy's ranch. Whenever he gets tired of things he goes and makes a film in Italy.

Rosinni was an Italian cowboy who hung around a dude ranch just outside of Reno. He made his living working with little calf-faced cupids. First he would let fly the magic Indian arrow. Then the magic wamwam poison would penetrate and infest his victim's blood. He would lure him into the stable-house, little Indian girls would dance for a while, then cowpuncher's lassos would fly from all quarters. He wore a black hat, tailored western-cut shirts, and snake-skin cowboy boots with spurs. He liked to go jingling in his spurs. When he got annoyed he liked to go out to the stables and mess around with the horses.

Solange wears a cowboy hat and little bandanas to parties but scarcely ever finds reason to leave New York. Everyone knows that he is completement subjuge par la charme du Far-West. Every night at six o'clock he goes out. Sometimes from Queens all the way to Manhattan. His life as a transsexual is hard and lonesome here, skirting the frontiers of various cultural, political and economic groups. Sometimes he has nightmares about the operation which, a month from now, will change all that. He always uses his black half-mask to his best advantage.



O. D. Porter

Henry is an eminent personality. He rides a white horse and has his own private jet. Henry is a chic type, all the cowboys and cowgirls say so, all the foreign ambassadors too. One time he scared all the communists out of two countries with one mystical word. But he is so divine that he scarcely ever has to speak—he can act in symbolic gestures, interpret terrorist's strategies, perceive the thoughts of heads of state by extra sensory perception. They all call him "Big White Father." When in New York he has lunch with the Economic Club.

Vladimir is a western badman but with a new and cultivated sense of evil. His cowboy-like hat is made of goat hide with a natural covering of lightly colored, finely brushed, cashmere and a simple dark and elegant silken band around it. His shirt is of the finest oriental silk. He is an eastern world exile, a dissident, a lover of freedom and of human rights, but a cruel man. An admirer too of youth and young children. His trousers are western only in the broad sense of the word—cut upon lines such as will hang nicely from his hips and make a broad gesture when his hands are in his pockets. He wears plainly colored ballet slippers. To his cruelty there is a certain delicacy. A press man asks him:

—Are you excited at the thought of little children's fingers?

—Hardly.

G. Carl Pitts

THE ONE MAN GOD

No one knew how long Zeke had lived in the old boxcar. He was there when my grandfather became yardmaster. Then he died. He was still there when my father became yardmaster. Then he died.

I remember, when I was still quite young, walking through the railyard with my father. I asked him, "What happens to old trains?"

All he said was, "They all come here to die." It was a nice answer, but I really didn't understand it.

"But what about that one?" I asked, pointing to an old, weather-beaten boxcar, with its 'Santa Fe' fading with each passing day.

"Oh," he said and then muttered something under his breath, "Oh, that's where Zeke lives."

"Who's Zeke?" I asked.

"Zeke's a hobo," came the reply. "All yards have their hoboes, not really wanted—but we can't seem to keep them off the property."

"But if they can't stay here, where can they go?" I asked. He didn't answer me. He probably thought it another one of my foolish 'kid' questions.

As I got a little older, I would walk down to the railyard to see my dad. He would show me around—show me how the trains run, how to switch the trains, how to signal—all the neat little things of running a railyard. After a while, I became a pretty familiar face at the 'yard'. The men came to know me on sight. Sometimes they would wave and smile, sometimes they would just nod their heads. They always had a kind word for me.

I would explore the railyard all day. I would crawl across the heaped-up, tar-blackened ties, tight-wire the many sets of nails, throw stones—all the things good little boys do. But, I was never, under any circumstances, to go on the North side of the yard. Not that it was particularly dangerous, it was 'not good to go there'. Of course, like a good little boy, I didn't heed any warnings.

I think it was a Saturday morning when I first met Zeke. I was investigating the rusted wheels by the North gate when I saw a man walking towards me. At first I thought it was my dad—he would kill me if he found me there. I thought of running, but it would do me no good. So I just stood there. As the figure approached, I knew it wasn't dad. The man was dressed in an old grey suit-coat, a dirty work shirt and grease-stained pants. Around his neck was a well-worn red bandana. His face was dirty and he hadn't shaved for a while. The stubble enhanced his exceedingly haggard appearance. Though he seemed old, he walked with quick, sharp steps. The cane he carried was easily as old as he. Just looking at his shoes you knew that he'd been around. He walked with his head down, either lost in thought or looking for something that was lost.

He probably would have walked right past me if I hadn't said anything. "Hello," I ventured, not knowing what else to say. "Did you lose something?"

He stopped and looked up at me. He thought for a moment. He took off his weather-stained derby and scratched his head. "No," he began thoughtfully, "no, I don't think so. Maybe I did some time ago, but I can't remember now." He gingerly replaced the derby atop his head. He gave me a look that seemed to burn right through me. I felt kind of silly just standing there, so I did the first thing that came to my mind. I dug down in my pocket and came up with a couple of pieces of gum.

"Want one?" I asked. He shambled over to me and with a large, rough hand took one of the gumballs. He held it up with his left hand and looked at it curiously.

"It's gum," I said and put the other piece in my mouth and began to chew, showing him what to do with it.

"I know," he said after a moment of thought, "it's been a long time since I was a kid." He popped it into his mouth and began to chew. He smiled, then laughed. To this day, I don't know how he did it. He had no teeth.

"You are a pretty smart kid, I can tell," he said with a toothless grin, "you must be Ben's boy." I nodded. "Ben was a pretty smart boy too." His voice trailed off and he seemed to be lost in some deep memories. "Yes, Ben was a smart boy too."

"What's your name?" he asked, smacking his lips. He seemed to be getting immense pleasure from that piece of gum.

"Tommy," I answered, trying to sound like a smart boy.

"Tommy," he mused. "Yes, Tommy is a good name for a smart boy." He eyed me again. I'll never forget those eyes as long as I live. They seemed like the last burning coals in a dying fire. But the eyes were only a part of the man. "Come and talk with me a while," he said and laid a large hand on my shoulder. That was another thing—he looked so rough, yet he was so gentle.

"Only for a while," I answered, "I have to be home for supper."

"Supper," he mused, "what do you have for supper?"

"Oh, the usual things, stuff like meat and potatoes and vegetables—ugh, I think we're having spinach tonight. But my mom usually makes some good stuff once in a while. You know, hot dogs, hamburgers and french fries. You know, good stuff. But my mom says I have to eat my vegetables. She says that they're good for me."

"Yes," he said thoughtfully. "You should eat your vegetables. They are good for you. You have a smart mother Tommy."

Every now and then, as we walked along, Zeke would bend over, pick up a handful of dirt and toss it into the air. He would watch it as it fell back to earth, the wind blowing the dust about—and then laugh. He would also point out interesting things. He seemed to know what and where all the things came from and what they used to belong to. He showed me a whistle from an old steam engine, an electro-magnet (or something like that), old switch boxes—things that have no use to anyone but him. He seemed to know quite a bit about trains. And I was thoroughly enjoying myself.

"What do you do," I then asked, "what do you do for a living?"

"Hmm, that's a good question," he answered. "I really don't do anything. I just kind of move around, if you take to my meaning."

"Gee!" I gasped, "isn't that fun! I wish I could do that. I wish I could be like you!"

"Hold on there Tommy-boy. You don't want to be like me," he said as he stopped dead in his tracks. "You don't want to be like me. You want to live with a roof over your head and eat hot meals. You want to have a nice warm bed to sleep in. You want clean clothes. You want. . ." He stopped suddenly. He looked at me with those dagger eyes. He slowly shook his head. "No, Tommy-boy, you don't want to be like me." He paused, as if in deep thought. "Are you hungry Tommy-boy?" he asked, regaining himself. "Would you like a bite to eat? I don't have much, but I'll gladly share it."

"Well, I don't know," I answered somewhat hurt. "I'm supposed to be back for supper." I paused, smiled and said, "but I've been late before." Zeke broke into a huge grin. I think he was glad to be with company again, however young. He picked me up and put me on his shoulders. His strength surprised me. He laughed and sang all the way home—his home—the boxcar.

The boxcar was an extraordinary place, perhaps even more extraordinary than the man himself. The car was in miserable shape. It was an old car—made of wood. Some of the siding slats had fallen out. Others hung by one or two rusty nails. The hand rungs, leading to the top of the car, were either broken off or had rusted off. The lettering 'Santa Fe' was barely visible. The color, thought it might have been yellow, was no longer recognizable. The stains of many summers and winters were upon it. The roof leaked. The floor was cracked. It smelled musty. But it was home.

Zeke lithely hopped up through the open door. He turned and gave me his hand. In a second, I was also inside. Then he closed the door. At that moment, my heart froze. I remembered the warnings of my father. I longed to be outside again. I promised myself I would listen to everything my parents told me. Even to eat my vegetables. I was scared. I wanted to cry. I couldn't see anything in the pitch-darkness. I heard a noise and I screamed. At that moment Zeke struck a match and lit a lantern that hung in a corner. The light was a welcome relief.

Zeke looked at me with those keen eyes and asked, "Did I scare you Tommy-boy? Well, I surely didn't mean to. But then again, I was scared of the dark when I was a kid."

The faint light of the lantern cast eerie shadows throughout the 'room'. Zeke sauntered to the other side of the car and lit another lantern. I could smell the dull odor of kerosene. The newly-lit lantern chased away most of the imagined dangers lurking in the shadows. But I remember always looking over my shoulder for things I never saw.

"Hungry?" he asked,

I just shrugged my shoulders.

"Well, I am," he said in a robust voice. He scurried around the room trying to set things in order. In the middle of the floor there were several sheets of corrugated steel and several rocks were arranged on them in a ring. Quickly he set some wood and kindling inside the ring and squirted some kerosene on the wood, then set a match to it. Flames shot up. I rolled to keep myself from getting torched. He looked at me and laughed. "Sorry," he said, "you were almost dinner, right Tommy-boy?" He laughed merrily and hustled off to another corner of the car.

"Not quite," I yelled after him, not really consoled, but laughing nonetheless.

While he was busying himself with supper. I had a chance to look around the room. There were several old chairs, no doubt found in some junk pile, that were sewed and stitched and patched with a rainbow of thread and cloth. Still, they looked most comfortable. A rickety wooden desk and chair stood against the far wall. A small cupboard hung above the desk. A small, rough, handmade chest of drawers stood next to the desk. In the middle of the wall hung a picture of a beautiful swan. The picture's color was such a marked contrast to the dingy whites, blacks and greys. It was the focal point of the whole room. It was his pride and joy.

Zeke came back and set out the table—well, it wasn't really a table at all. He gave me a tin plate, a battered tin cup, a fork and a knife. "Aye Tommy-boy, we'll have a real feast. "Here," he said as he gave me a long metal rod and a hot dog. "Put a doggy on the leash." I wasn't quite sure what to do and I didn't want to lose my image as a smart boy, so I waited for him to make the first move. He stuck a hot dog on the end of his 'leash' and held it over the fire. I quickly did likewise. "Aye, there's a smart boy," he chuckled. I smiled and felt very pleased with myself. Then he put a can of beans in the fire. He also placed a battered coffee pot in a corner of the fire. "I'm sorry lad," he said, "I have no milk or enough water, so you'll have to drink my coffee." Even though I was quite young, I remember it

as the best cup of coffee I ever had.

True, it was a real feast. I ate several hot dogs and a whole plate of beans—something I never did at home. After dinner, he brought out his most cherished possession—a can of peaches. Somehow, canned peaches never tasted so good. When I finally put the plate down, I was stuffed. All I could do was sit there with a silly smile on my face.

"Filled up Tommy-boy?" he asked with a grin.

"Oh yes," I answered, barely able to talk. "Yes, thank you very much!"

"My pleasure, my lad, my pleasure. You just sit there while I put these things away."

While Zeke was putting away the dishes, I was able to watch him. It seemed that years had fallen from his shoulders in a short time. He wiped his hands on his dirty clothes. He came back and sat down next to me. He pulled a bottle from under his coat.

"Aye Tommy-boy, it's always good to have a bit of a nip after dinner," he said as he took a swig. "It's getting dark outside—don't you think you ought to be getting home?"

"Oh please, if it's all right with you, couldn't I stay for a little longer? My mom won't get mad at me, I promise."

"You sure now?" he asked with a serious look.

I nodded. "Could you tell me a story, I mean about you?" I asked with a sheepish grin. "I'd kind of like to know what it's like—you know, being a hobo."

Zeke took another drink. He wiped his lips on his ragged coat sleeve. He looked deeply at me, then his eyes wandered off. "What's it like . . . what's it like," he mumbled as he took another drink. "I really don't know what it is like. It's a hard life Tommy-boy, a hard life with no real comfort or rest. Look around you—this is all I have."

"But it's kind of nice," I said, trying to sound cheerful. "You know, you're a good man Zeke."

He looked at me and smiled. He reached over the low-burning coals and gently patted me on the head. "Thank you very much. Thank you very much Tommy-boy. You certainly are a smart boy." He took another drink and fell silent. He looked at me and smiled. "I'm going to tell you things you probably won't understand."

I nodded dreamily.

"I was young once, full of what men called ideals. I was bold and fearless. I wanted to do things different. I grew up with the railroad. My dad was an engineer. I really didn't have a mother . . ." His voice trailed off. "One day, my dad didn't come home. No message—nothing." He coughed. Not a dry cough, but a heavy, rasping cough. He continued. "I knew a lot about things, but I wasn't really good at any one of them. So I hit the road. It was easy back then. Most of the engineers knew you on sight. They used to call you by name. 'Zeke,' they would say, 'riding today?' Yes, those were the good old days." He took another drink.

"Back then, everyone was friendly. Everyone had a kind word. When you hit town, you could go to a place and say that you needed a meal and they would put you to work for it. You could go from town to town that way. But now it's different. Everything is so hard to do. No one cares . . ." His voice trailed off again and he spat contemptuously into the fire.

I hope Zeke wasn't upset with me 'cause that's the last thing I remember him saying. I did a very impolite thing—I fell asleep. I can't say how long I slept, but it must have been a while. It was a restless sleep. I had dreams—but not pleasant ones. In fact, they were quite disturbing. Maybe it was all a dream.

I remember seeing a figure in the distance, stooped, nearly doubled, looking for something on the ground. As the figure drew closer, I could see that he was old. The years hung heavily on his drooping shoulders. His shabby clothes clung to his wiry frame. He came up to me and stopped. He looked up—his face was familiar, but I couldn't remember his name. He had a sad, almost despairing look. He was tired; his ashen, drawn face gave away little but the many years it had seen. Once again, he looked to the ground. He picked up a handful of dirt and tossed it into the air. As it settled back to earth, I knew that there was some sort of meaning to it. But I didn't bother to think about it.

He beckoned to me. Suddenly I was filled with a great fear. As the figure turned, he waved again. I couldn't resist—I had to follow. He led me on a long winding road. He showed me great feats and he showed me evil deeds. I saw honest but poor men; I saw rich men, reeking of hypocrisy. I observed the life and death of many and the birth of few. The world was in turmoil, but I was at peace.

We visited many places—some I can remember, others are only a vague shadow. The people all seemed so distant—the mad rush was still on. Cold and hard they seemed. All held the same distant stare. The age that showed on their faces belied their early years. And all

were scattered by the mighty wind.

We went on. I saw all the marvels that man had made. I wanted to stay, but there was no time. We had to hurry on. There was so much more to see.

I followed him. He was controlling my will. Several times I wanted to turn back. I was afraid, but he urged me on. Once again the marvels of the world amazed me. There was so much to see, but no time to enjoy.

The wind whistled in my ears. The bent figure in front of me, his tattered garments blown about by the wind, still hobbled along. The unseen weight seemed to be dragging him closer to the ground. He was valiantly fighting his enemy.

But he was beaten. He slowed and, as if exhausted, slumped to his knees. His eyes seemed to be clouded. The lines on his face, wrought of time and trouble, became more pronounced. He pursed his lips to speak, but uttered no sound. His shoulders sagged. His will failed. And when his will failed, so too did mine. The howling wind lifted me up and carried me away, leaving him behind. He tried to raise his head, but the weight was too great. I caught a last glimpse of him, a dark grey shadow, blurred and distorted by the fierce wind.

I was carried back—back along the long and winding road. Everything I had seen was replayed backwards at a great speed. Everything was so comical. Things that had once lay in ruins were rebuilt. Lives were renewed. Ages were relived. And then there was nothing.

I am old now. I have seen many things and I have lived through all of them. It is true, I was young once, but that was a long time ago. I kind of wish I was a kid again—but then again, everyone does. It was such a long time ago when it happened, but I remember it well. It helped me to understand people and places and the things that people do in those places.

I'm tired now. Maybe the world is getting to me. Maybe it all wasn't real. I don't know. I don't know.

Item:

A body was found along the old Wabash Railroad tracks on the north side of town today. Police have tentatively identified it as that of Tom 'Tommy' Trabre, described as a vagrant. There was a note found beside the body. Police theorize that it was a suicide. Authorities are investigating. Trabre was 38.

Tom Mihalik



Second Place Graphic

Faye Kachur

Congratulations on your excellent impersonation of a human being

i bared my nape
upon your napkin
(and was as honest as the day is long)
chop-chop!
night fell
and you laughed
between your teeth
as you sipped
your tepid teas
while i chased
my rolling head
bump
bump
down the hall

O.C. Upanti

Testimony

When Messiahs come, I worship
at their feet and let their paths
(gestaltic pearls by languish knots)
direct my feet.

I am the first follower of whatever—
from Spinoza to Sartre, Dante to Camus
(give or take a maharishi now and then)—
the True Believer.

So, if the Savior comes in a white suit
and announces his intention to save the world
(or some small part of it I care about),
I'll enlist.

I will grasp His truth and march
in rank until the file is rank and I
(washed in the new blood of an old birth)
slouch to Bedlam, there to be reborn.

Paul Wray

CHILDREN

running in the rain drops of enlightenment
springing to the call of the spring sounds
that are the property of children
the greatest treasure of them all given to
the greatest giver of them all
dream on dreamer childhood seer pleasure giver
why do we doubt you why do we make you sad
what is it
what is this thing we call childhood
is not it the very thing that we seek and the very thing
that we rob our children of
while we rush to make a secure future for them
we miss the most powerful and most loving minds
the most loving minds in the universe
their feet still feel the mudpuddles of creation
their eyes gaze upon the birth of forever
you thief you robber slayer of childhood dreamland
give them the truth
the dreamer and the dreamed
tell them
you dare not it is too much for you to know
are you a knower
ask them
they wont tell you anything
the children only show you and then
then you come along and show them the insanity
of your visions and then profess them to be true
don't bother
they know the truth of the matter
and they keep trying to tell you only you
gave them a bike
to contemplate the universe is childs play
leave my children
and take your games with you.

A FACADE

In Memorium

As a child
she gathered wonders:
flowers of clover,
violets from fields,
pebbles with a special feel.
The spring
the dogwoods didn't bloom,
not knowing
how the sun had teased them
into thinking it was time
the sad sprinkling
of fuzzy knots
gleaned from the greening grass
had seemed a marvel.
She filled her pockets with them.
And when she learned the truth,
the barren limbs
had bloomed, the more lovely,
night flowering jasmine,
roses without thorns,
with all the dreamy shapes
and colors in her mind.
Now, when the dancing dimity
at the nursery window
has been so cruelly halted
she sees a dogwood blooming.
It rains a windy shower
of pierced petals
into the reaching arms of children
lovely and soft
as the memory
of what is gone.
It is soothing:
tears, then smiles.

Lara Manning

A facade
is just a show to
keep a smile

glued to the pain of
being human.
Perhaps it's wrong to

pose a face to
shirk intrusion. But if
everyone shrieked the

terror they feel; if
fears prowled free of
inhibitions, could we

manage our hives? Could we
ever smile, as
sometimes happens,

deep from the inside?
So let the
masquerade

bop to the
usual beat. I won't
stretch an objection. Let the

whore coo like a
dove, and let the
ear that hears

reply with
perfect insincerity—
perhaps it is better to

conduct business
behind the shields of
protocol—where there's

little that's
real, and almost
nothing to hurt if

all day
remembering
my mother
bent
over kitchen sink

Lawrence Fitzgerald

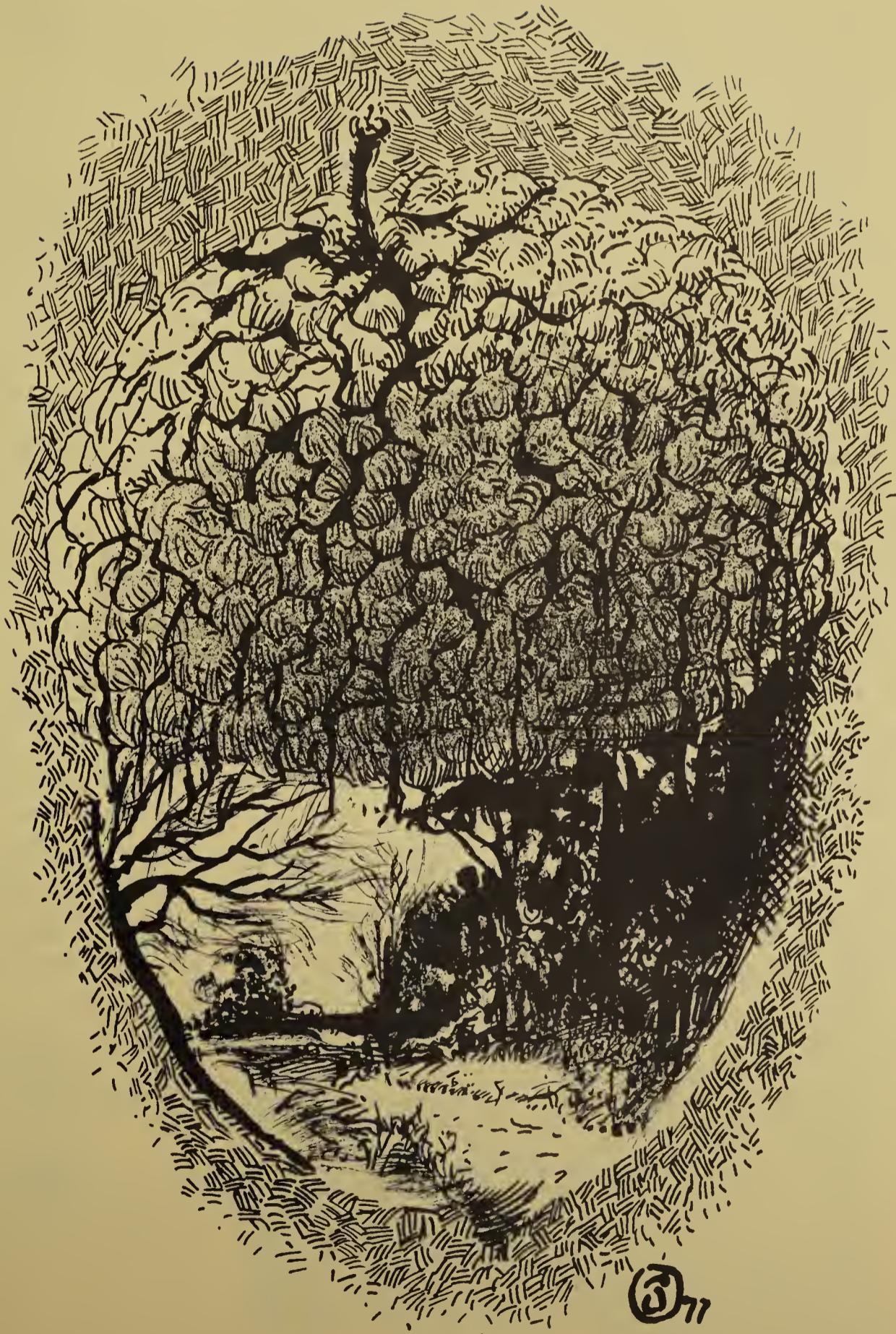
something,
suddenly,
should go wrong.

Michael Kulycky

St. Margaret's Emergency

Give him oxygen.
What the hell else
Can we do?
Straighten your arm, Tony.
Relax, Tony.
God damn it, listen!
Straight line—
Better get his wife.
Yea, he's Catholic—
Was.
Our cubicles stared at each other.
Featureless movie screens
Allow only harried silhouettes
To pass.
Straining my eyes through the lightest
And thinnest of opaque.
Only to hear
Death.

JOHN KOLAS



CROTCHETS: AN ORAL TRADITION

Nobody much cared about the crotchets of the townsfolk until that day in 1956 when Alvin Aster's crotchet got out of hand. On the face of things, Alvin's crotchet was no more unusual than Burr Rosen's growing hybrid sunflowers big as pillows in his garden, or the Saddle family's habit of canning twenty quarts of hominy every Fall. No, Aster's crotchet didn't even seem eccentric in that part of Western Kansas where Summer harvest finds college graduate farmers scratching like hens in the dirt, rubbing heads of wheat between their hands, throwing the grains into their mouths, and chewing until the wheat turns to gum.

No, old Alvin's crotchet was no worse than most; in fact, it was better than Asa Martin's. Asa used to take a whip to his pickup every time it didn't rain when it should have, and every time it did rain when it shouldn't have. (Both circumstances occurred frequently.) He never, so far as anyone knows, ever brought needed rain, nor even stopped an unneeded drizzle, but he did wear out a lot of whips. Folks never complained about his habit though. Then, they might not have complained because he owned half the county. But Ben Haswell owned the other half of the county, and folks were always moaning about him. Of course, he was a Jew; he didn't get quarter anywhere; everybody knew you couldn't trust a Jew. So, folks always complained about Ben, but never said a word against Asa because he gave lots of money to the Baptists, and was, the Baptists said, a good Christian. If the Methodists had doubts about the destination of Asa's soul, they never said so out loud.

And Elmer "The Evangelist" Hornblower used to sing hymns through the loudspeaker mounted on his car. He preached, too, that the end was near, yet the folks tolerated him.

Crotchets were a part of life. A person could do 'most anything and get by with it in the name of habit, or farming, or religion. But, one day in 1956, Alvin Aster changed all that and turned the town against crotchets for good.

It was 'long about 9 o'clock in the evening of the hottest day in August that Alvin Aster came chugging into town in his red, '49 Ford pickup, singing at the top of his lungs. That, in itself, wasn't unusual; Alvin had a nice voice, a clear tenor with a slight vibrato, and he didn't use a loudspeaker, nor preach of the wrath to come like Elmer "The Evangelist." The townspeople were long used to Alvin's singing as he drove down the street to the drugstore. It was his crotchet.

Some say Alvin wasn't doing anything different that day from any other; some say he was singing louder. But all agree that that was the day Alvin went off the deep end and proved what a danger crotchets can be. He was singing the then popular ballad, "Lavender Blue, Dilly, Dilly" and just like a broken record, he got stuck on the words, "Dilly, Dilly," and couldn't get any farther. Over and over he kept singing them. June Kuhlman at the drugstore gave him two aspirins, a Bromo Seltzer, and a cherry Coke to help him get off the words, but they were just like a case of hiccups; he simply couldn't stop. Some friends took him to the doctor; he, of course, the old quack, was no help at all.

"Dilly, Dilly; Dilly, Dilly." It got worse and worse. Finally, the sheriff carted him off to the nuthouse in Larned where he died a couple of years later, still "dillying." Some folks say that two psychiatrists when crazy trying to cure him, but that's probably just idle talk.

Well, as a result of Alvin's troubles, people are a lot more careful about their behavior now. Mothers threaten their children into obedience by telling them that their bad behavior might make them end up like Alvin, and that to "dilly-dally" about their work is a greater sin than blasphemy. The Dairy Queen doesn't sell "Dilly Bars" anymore, and the favorite folk expression, "It's a dilly," has fallen into disuse, to say nothing of disfavor.

Why, one time a stranger happened through town on his way to Denver on a hot August day, and somebody down at the '66 station said to him, "Hot day, ain't it?" And the stranger replied, "It's a dilly of a scorcher." The station owner threatened him with a tire iron for cussing in front of a good Christian man, and said he'd run the stranger out of town on a rail if he used such language again. The stranger, slightly befuddled and greatly frightened, left the town and never went back, certain that everyone there was crazy.

INCENTIVE

Now's the time,
I'm asking you, brothers and sisters,
I'm asking you and begging for
attention to what I'm saying.

Now's the time,
stop this mudslinging,
because it's useless—
throw stones instead.

Stop this mudslinging,
because it only dirties
whoever's in the way
and the next day
when he's finished washing himself off,
there's no sign at all
that he's had mud thrown at him.

But those who'd seen it
and remember it,
will have pity on him and say:
"Poor fellow,
he was awfully unlucky
to get that on his clothes."

Throw stones instead,
because a stone hurts,
and if you toss, for example,
big enough stones
at the wretch's nose
it won't do him any good to wash himself,
instead he'll have to
go round with his nose in a cast
many days afterwards
and to add to the pain in his nose
people will laugh at him.

Now's the time,
stop throwing mud
throw stones,
and let him who's the most sinful among you,
throw the most stones.

**Written by Gudmundsson
Translated by S.F.D. HUGHES**

Dear Runaway,

From the window ledge, seeing your childhood swing blowing back and forth by the winds of heaven,
We see you
Tiny fingers, elfin size body with sandal shod feet, tiny cries, "Please come and swing me,"
We tend you
Last-born, out of love of two—just mortal woman and mortal man,
We want you
Aware that you are to be the last gift of life placed into our care,
We welcome you
The number of your days, the hours of your nights, the brightness of your moments,
We cherish you

Beautiful child, sweet song of the wind, tender as the dew, from the heart of God,
Nurtured through years in love by family and friends,
Although your mind was exposed to the seas, its tides, and its tales,
An open home—no subject taboo—you drank knowledge—responses direct and honest.
But your paths were sheltered from the biting, ravaging wind.

In looking back through glistening eyes, we see we intellectualized, theorized, socialized,
The ugly and profane—the life your father and I chose not for you, or us, to pursue.
Thus your exposure to thought was great—but your hurt was limited.
From roots to wings, you knew we were eagerly joyous over your growth, from birth to eternity.
You knew we would never clip your wings so that you could not soar like an eagle.

Yet somewhere somehow in the last few months,
You passed us by like a shadow in the night leaving the slumbering leaf untouched,
Life giving unto life its eternal link of destiny,
And we did not recognize the woman taking leave of the child.
Leave taking, like coming together, can be joyous and expanding.
Somehow you did not understand . . . or is it perhaps that we did not understand?

We would not have bound you with either our love or with our hands,
For growth is ever onward never, never backward.
But, unknowingly, our willing destiny to set you free was not enough.
We were unaware that behind your gentleness, your litesome body, your delicately beautiful face,
There was a sprinter, Olympic-style, longing for the split of the air with your wings,
The sheer abandonment, welcoming the searing breath to the lungs, the sinew stretching race.

From the long ago birthing, to the bursting of the chrysalis open wide,
We were preparing
Keeping our eyes and our hearts on your progress,
We our very selves were giving
Nothing held back—dawn to dawn—never counting it loss,
We were loving
From the blossoming of the women—to departure—an unbearably brief thirty minutes,
We were yesterdays reliving
From the placing of the suitcase on the bed to the snapping of the lid,
We were dying
From the shutting of our door latch to the slam of an unknown car door,
We were crying

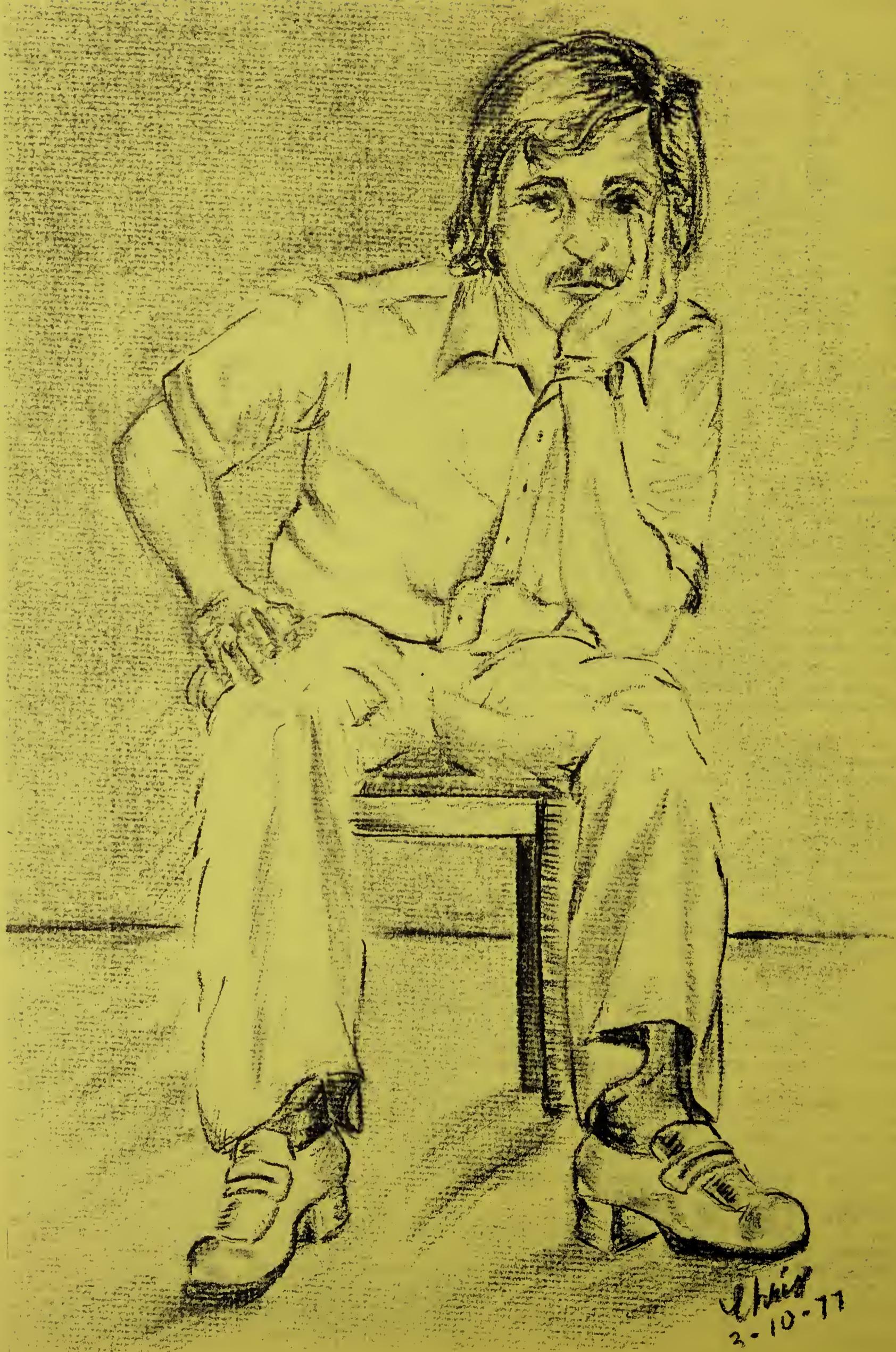
So darling daughter, somewhere out there in this cradle of God's universe,
Spreading your wings, soaring so high, we wish you well along your way.
We wish we could have viewed the splendor of your flight,
Have been among those who applaud your successes,
And weep with you when you fail—as we all will from time to time.

Life is the moment to moment living, not just the "happenings,"
To rise from the dust of the earth to become a living soul,
To walk tall with wisdom and humbleness,
And to hear the Master breathe, "My good and faithful servant."
And to love is to share and embrace life's moments—to roll away the lonely darkness.

May God hold you in the palm of His hand,
And may you find someone along the way who will share all the moments of your life,
The great and the small, and will, in love,
Take time to learn to know the tapestry of which you were so lovingly woven.

Amen, Amen

Dad and Mom



Christine Colte

I REMEMBER THUNDER

I'll never forget that day I first saw you. You were dancing along the fence-row, dragging a ridiculously large, tree limb from your mouth. I fell for you from that first moment. You were so nimble and shiny, and full of life! You represented the perfect thoroughbred that you were, and I wanted you more desparately than anything I'd ever wanted. Had you told me then how long the battle would be between our two wills, I never would have believed it, but you didn't. You merely momentarily interrupted your game and came near the fence where I was standing. You surveyed me in such a condescending manner! With nostrils distended and quivering, fine-pointed ears strained foreward, and that sculptured head held so high, I knew that you were both noble and beautiful.

Do you remember how I used to ride you right up to the little drive-in by the highway? What a delight! Picking our way carefully until we got right up behind the car-hop, hardly anyone ever saw us do that. We were so quiet and careful. We were experts! Do you remember the time we got within inches of her and you stretched your fine neck out with your nose only inches from the back of her neck? When you snorted, it was an explosion of hot air! She must have thought it was the devil himself, coming to claim her!

It was so much fun to be the center of attention there—you with your grape soda, and me with my root beer. Do you still like grape soda, Thunder? Do you crave it when the summer sun boils down so hot and turns the turf into steaming spinach?

We always left them laughing there. No one had ever seen a horse with an affinity for grape soda. You'd pick the bottle up so daintly and swoop it high in the air while its delicious fluid bubbled down your throat in one long flow of ectasy. You always finished first.

They never believed their eyes when we whirled to go. You, the big clown, would drop your act and wheel that immense body of yours in one, slow motion, arabesque of perfect grace. We'd leave the drive-in behind with its cars, noise, lights and gaping patrons. With your massive, pumping strides, we fairly flew. In their shock, some must have thought we were only an aberation in the heat waves of mid-summer.

When we flew away, our play really began. You became the race horse that you'd always wanted to be, and I became the eagle I'd dreamed of. By that time, we knew that the possibilities of the two of us together, was greater than the mere sum of us apart. I knew that you never wanted to love me, but you couldn't help yourself. You wanted the freedom to make your dreams come true, being bred for speed and tuned for grace. You learned that I was the ticket to your dream world and you were mine.

That's the way we were, you and I. We were one when we were together. We were dreamers. Our young, lean bodies fit together and made a whole. And so it was that our two worlds, likewise, blended.

We did live in two worlds though. Did you know that? Did you know that I had never lived in two worlds with any other living thing? The first world, Thunder, was the very real one where we were the fine performers; And the second was the world of our fantasies, where we were absolute monarch; Our dreams always came true.

Thunder, did I ever tell you how I felt when I was on your back? When we fairly streaked above the ground, you defying gravity with your graceful motion, and me, clinging like a burr to your mane? We were the wind itself. When I held my cheek along the arch of your straining neck, my long hair and your black mane flowed along behind, mingling with the wind. We were a song and the deepest rhythm of our being made a perfect harmony.

I delighted in the power you gave me. The messages electrically flowed between us, and with only the slightest motion of my wrist, all 1,000 pounds of living, quivering, horse-flesh slid to a gliding stop. I loved the way you learned to fold your hindquarters under the barrel of your chest and sink back with stiffened forelegs while your fetlocks brushed along the ground. Do you know some cow ponies never learn that? When we were together, Thunder, the world was magic. We never thought of the future or the past because the present was so perfect.

**Gently falling snow
Tucks the world in with softness,
Comforting bare earth.**

Evelyn Rodgers

I must tell you that there was a time after I left you that I forgot about magic. I forgot the look of the moon at night, the smell of fresh apples and hay stacks, and sassafrass roots in the spring-time. I forgot how it felt to lie on my back in the tall grasses and watch the clouds drift by while hot sun melted my bones. I forgot the sound of the jingling bit as you cropped the sweet, June clover.

When I forgot all of this, a light slowly went out. Before I knew it, the whole world was swallowed up by a thick, grey fog. At first, I was fascinated by the quiet it brought as it swirled between me and the past and the future and the present. Soon, the sun was obliterated. Suddenly, one morning, I woke up choking on that fog. I could hardly breathe. The weight of the fog cast a wet blanket over my whole body. Oh, I don't want to remember how long it was that I ached while that penetrating chill enveloped me! I only know that it was too long.

How did you know where I was, I was so startled that night when you walked into my sleep. I didn't recognize you at first. It had been so long since we had sailed above together—you on gentle wings, and me, on your back. How did you know that I needed you? Was there some electric message passed along the reins? Well, you can't imagine how startled I was when I heard the thunder of your hooves as you raced along the back roads of my mind, trying to get me to notice you. It had been so long!

I hardly remember climbing on your back that night, for the first time in a very long time. I do remember how you spoke to me, and I, surprised, was still able to cling to your back in answer as we raced ever upward. You took me out of the fog and into the sun that I love. I was recharged as that same warmth again melted my bones. Together with you, I found something that I had lost in the dust and sweat of life.

Well, in that rendezvous in darkness, you carried me out into June's summer and I am alive! Now I promise you, that I am not going to forget the young girl who rode the big, blood-bay called Thunder. I promise you that sometimes I will chase butterflies. I will not forget to lie on my back in the tall grass and watch the clouds float by. I will look at the moon in the fall and remember the smell of fresh apples, hay stacks, and the inside of barns. I will smile as much as possible, and if it will help someone else, and not seem phony, I will even smile when I don't feel like it! I will always try to keep the sight of dreams in my mind's eye. And Thunder, I shall consider the possibilities of the future, but I will never again live in it because I know now that it is always slightly out of reach. I will work and I will live. Tonight I will sleep and dream of you because you are both noble and beautiful.

Lonna Fullerton

The Carousel

There's something about a real tree, Carol thought as she walked across the living room to hang a delicate sequined bird just close enough to one of the tiny lights that it caught the rays and bounced glitter as it turned. Maybe it's the smell—maybe just checking the stand to see how much water it's taken. There's an alive feeling. Nothing like the perfect, plastic trees almost everybody else had. Friends told her how much nicer it was not to have to vacuum up needles. You could even buy cans of a piney spray and get the same smell, but she knew it would never really be the same. Not like a live tree.

It wasn't that she hadn't thought about an artificial tree. For years they'd argued, every December, tramping through icy lots comparing the brittle evergreens leaning against storm fences like tired soldiers. Too tall; too short; crooked trunk, and he was not cutting the bottom off something he bought by the foot.

Last year had been the absolute end. When he dragged the tree out, by the time he reached the front door it had about as many needles as a rusty umbrella frame, and the carpeting had disappeared under a trail of brownish-green quills. She remembered yelling, "George, this is it! I am just not cleaning up this mess one more year. That tree was probably cut in September, and now I have to spend until the Fourth of July finding needles, *needles*, NEEDLES. I'm just sick of it, George. Sick. There are after-Christmas sales, and"

"And **nothing**," he said. "There will be no phoney Christmas trees in this house. Everything else about Christmas is going to hell, and this is one issue where I'll never back down."

Carol gave him all the reasons the other girls preferred a man-made tree: neater, straighter, cheaper in the long run; but George had made up his mind, and that was that. She had learned when to keep still. He promised her the next year would be different as she hauled the Hoover from the front hall closet.

Carol remembered finding the last needle. It was the fifteenth of August. She had been cleaning up after Billy's birthday party, and there it was right next to the piano. One lonely little needle. That evening it lay smugly in the middle of George's dinner plate. "What the hell's this?" he said holding it up to the light. "Just a reminder," she said, "that they're probably getting ready to cut the trees in Michigan."

They didn't discuss it again. Not a word. November passed, and she kept making the little jewelled ornaments from the kits at Lee Wards, buying presents and hiding them, baking cookies and freezing them. Not one word was said about a tree until the second week in December.

She remembered how he looked when he came in that night all flushed from the cold and smiling. Not like George at all. "Honey," he said, "I talked to a guy at work today who knows a place we can cut our own tree. Cut it down live; then we know it's fresh. Can't be any fresher than cutting it still growing. And they're all the same price. None of this 'by the foot' stuff. We'll take the kids and a saw, and it'll be like a regular family outing. All together. Maybe we'll make it a tradition. Every year we'll go out and pick our own tree growing, and if it drops any needles, I'll clean them up. Every one."

Carol didn't answer at first. It was all the other years—the time the vacuum cleaner clogged and it cost \$12.50 to get it fixed—the tree that leaned no matter where you stood and gave her headaches—but he looked so enthusiastic, and it was his own idea. She finally nodded. Besides, it did sound Christmassy. Maybe there would be a sleigh and a fluffy snowfall. They could sing carols. A vision of a Currier & Ives print went through her head. They planned to go Sunday.

Sunday it rained.

II

"George, are you sure these directions are right?" They had passed the same farmhouse six times.

"Everett was very clear, Carol." George gripped the wheel as if the car had a mind of its own. "He even drew a map."

"George, I don't trust anyone who puts north at the bottom of a map." She turned the paper upside down and squinted at the inverted writing. "We were OK to the last turn. I'll just bet the right should be a left. Billy! Put that gum right back in your mouth."

"I get to saw it down. T-i-m-b-e-r." She turned to glare at her son as he wound the gum around his tongue.

"Mother, make him stop. That's gross." Michele curled up in her corner of the backseat and stared at her brother as if he were some kind of insect.

They went back to the last crossroad and turned left. A mile farther propped against a bush was a limp cardboard sign with the crayoned greeting: Right Here! Cut Your Own Tree!! Two ruts led to a muddy clearing where a figure in a mackinaw stood warming his hands over a small fire. The rain had diminished to a light mist. As they got out of the car, the man hardly looked up.

"Watch the puddles," said Carol inanely as Billy stepped ankle deep in muck. A contented smile spread across his face. Michele tiptoed carefully from dry spot to dry spot pausing as she passed her brother to lean down and whisper, "Creep."

George opened the trunk to get the saw and called, "Carol, you got the camera?" She nodded patting her purse, and they walked toward the fire. The man still looked as if he didn't know they were there—or didn't care.

They'd already decided what kind of tree. At first George had suggested Scotch pine, but Carol said she favored blue spruce. He'd been in no mood to argue—as long as it was a real tree.

The man just grunted and pointed when George asked about blue spruce. Grunted and pointed to a path. Said they were about a block that way. Couldn't miss 'em.

The path got muddier and muddier. George kept saying weren't they having a good time; Michele complained there were fewer and fewer dry spots; Billy smiled blissfully as if he were wading through chocolate pudding with a spoon in each pocket. Images clicked across Carol's mind as if her eyes were walking around something snapping slides for a Viewmaster reel. No Currier & Ives print. It was the gorgeous 'true-to-life' tree at Marshall Field. On sale a week back complete with Italian lights and two cans of Essence of Pine.

They found the spruce. One more bend in the path and there they were—a planned forest of neat green rows, all about six feet high and spaced as neat as bowling pins. Ready for harvest. They walked the rows three times until they all agreed. Their tree. Not too tall; not too short; trunk looked straight. Carol stepped back and took the camera from her purse. Really is a pretty tree, she thought. George handed Billy the saw and told him to be careful not to cut himself.

As the saw bit into its trunk, the tree shuddered. Billy gripped his lower lip with his teeth and continued cutting. Slowly the tree started to tip, and George reached to hold it upright. "Give your sister a turn," he said, and Billy grudgingly offered the saw to Michele. She took one look at the blade and stepped back. "MU-ther, it's all full of yuck. It'll get on my gloves." Billy smiled, stuck out his tongue and returned to sawing, mumbling something about chicken girls.

The tree leaned against George's shoulder as Carol focused the camera. Pretty, she thought. Really pretty. For a second she wondered how much bigger it would have been next year—or the year after that; but this was why it was planted, for a family to enjoy it. George stepped back. As the tree fell, she took a picture.

III

I've got to get hold of myself, Carol thought pinning another row of pearls where the directions said. It's absolutely silly to be sitting here making another ornament when there's cookies to bake and half the presents aren't even wrapped. I'm just nervous. It's almost become a habit to sit and make ornaments when I'm nervous. I've even made them in August! Not that I ever admitted it because that's silly, but this is ridiculous. I have to leave soon.

"What time do you plan to leave?" George called from the bedroom. Carol jumped, and the pin went into her thumb. She took a deep breath and answered with a forced calm, "Oh, maybe half an hour." She sucked her thumb as if she enjoyed the taste of her own blood.

"I still don't know why she couldn't find someone closer to drive her," he said walking into the kitchen. "Another ornament? Woman, you are just something else. There's got to be a million things to do the day before Christmas, and you sit there like a moron with your silly beads—sucking your thumb yet."

She stared at the thing in her right palm. Almost finished. From far away it looked like a drum; but when you got close, you could see it was a merry-go-round with four tiny horse sequins chasing each other around a felty green spool rimmed with pearls. Simple to make. Just simple. And so pretty. All she had left to do was section it off with silver cord to make the upright bars, and it could just hang on the tree and glitter. I'll finish it, she said to herself. I'll finish it, and I'll give it to Jean. Makes a nice present. I should bring a present.

"And this appointment has me bugged," he said reaching into the cupboard for a pitcher. Walking to the sink he carefully adjusted the hot and cold for the right mix and filled the pitcher halfway.

"It's not my appointment," she snapped reaching for scissors to cut the cord.

"I mean your friend's appointment. I don't know where you find some of these people you're forever accumulating, but I never heard of anyone needing a D & C the day before Christmas. As an outpatient yet!" He wiped the bottom of the pitcher with a towel and carried it into the living room. Carol stared at the clock, then wound the last piece of cord across the top of the spool and pinned it. Her hands shook.

"Stand's half down again, sweetheart," he called cheerfully. "It's really thirsty. Aren't you glad we got a live tree? I told you there's nothing like a live tree."

Live, she said slowly to herself.

"I think I'll leave a little bit early," she said pushing back her chair and walking down the hallway toward the bedroom. "You know this ornament I just finished? Well, I think I'll just wrap it up in tissue paper and bring it to Jean for a present. We have two more just like it and lots more other kinds all over the tree so I think I'll just give this one away. For a present. I like to give people presents, don't you?" She walked down the hall with the hastily wrapped gift and reached into the closet for her coat. "And besides, traffic might be a little heavy, and I'd just hate to be late. You know how I am about being late. I just hate it. So I'll leave now because we're supposed to be at the clinic at two o'clock so I'd guess I'll be back around five and I'd really appreciate it if you'd peel a few potatoes and put them in cold water. It's got to be cold, and you've got to cover them or they get all brown. I don't know if it hurts them, like if they spoil or anything, but they just don't look very nice"

He walked past her with the look she'd learned to call silent, brooding, irritated. "You and your goddamn friends," he mumbled.

She shook her purse to find her keys and walked slowly to the front door. One hand on the knob she called, "Bye, kids." They didn't answer. Probably didn't hear her through the blare of the TV. Probably didn't even hear the door shut. Nice kids though. Nice kids. Almost didn't need her anymore. It was hard to remember when they were babies.

The car started easily. Lord, she said to herself as she backed out of the driveway, my stomach has to stop jumping. It isn't even me, and I'm a wreck. All I have to do is drive. Just drive. And it's perfectly legal. Recently legal, but legal. So why do I feel like I'm driving the getaway car for a bank robbery?

Turning north a mile she reached the junction with the expressway and slid carefully into the flow of traffic. Lucky, she thought. Every time I get on this thing in one piece I feel lucky. You have got to drive defensively. One little slip and it could be all over. She lit a cigarette and reached into her pocket for a thirty-cent toll. It felt very free to be driving. In control. Alone.

I did not lie, she thought. It was not a lie. Jean did need someone to drive her, and she is having a D & C, sort of. The procedure is very similar. I promised I'd take her because I was one of the only people who knew. And I couldn't let her go alone. Not the day before Christmas.

IV

They had talked about it over lunch. Only a week ago. Two women; neither young nor old. Not too many years before they had been girls, but divorce for the one and disillusionment for the other showed on their faces with the wiser eyes.

"I'm pregnant," Jean said quietly. She took a big bite of her tuna salad sandwich. "I'm pregnant, and I'm not married anymore; got a good job and two kids to support." She stared at her sandwich as if it held some kind of answer.

"How did that happen?" Carol's face registered a questioning horror, and she leaned back as if it might be catchy.

"Girl, I got to tell you everything?" They both started to laugh. It was OK to admit these things now. Just two women.

"Well, no," said Carol fumbling with her napkin. "I mean, I understand the how; I guess I should have said the why. You know what I mean. People just don't have to-be pregnant unless they want to. Not in this day and age."

"It happened. OK? You remember the friend I told you about. Him and me got a real good thing goin, and we just got sloppy. Not all his fault and not all mine. It was just an accident, and he feels real bad about it. Said he hates to put me through it."

"How do you feel?" said Carol shoving her plate to the side.

"Man, that sandwich was just what I needed. You remember the nausea, that crawly feeling in your stomach that keeps tellin you if you just eat something you'll feel better?"

"God, yes," said Carol. "When I carried Michele, I'd keep soda crackers by the bed and nibble on a few before I even dared get up. Then all day I'd keep wanting anything with tomatoes—tomato soup, salami sandwiches with tomato slices and lots of mayonnaise, stewed

tomatoes. After she was born, I could hardly look at a tomato. With Billy it was orange juice and 7-Up mixed together with lots of ice."

"Never had it this bad with Charles. Matter of fact, with Charles I just kept feelin better and better. People even told me I kept lookin better and better; but it wasn't that way with Joellen. Girl, I threw up the whole way. Came time to deliver I was the rattiest woman a body ever saw. Just skin and bones and a huge belly. Got so I was afraid to brush my hair the way it was fallin out. Guess I can't blame the old man for lookin around."

"Other women?" said Carol quickly lighting a cigarette.

"Sluts," said Jean as if the word tasted bad. "Thought he was a real fox too."

"You knew?"

"Hell, girl, that dude was stupid. Told me he was going visitin a aunt in Ohio and shows up four days late with some story about car trouble in Dayton. I goes out to clean up the car—he was a pig too—and right there in the backseat is one earring and a sack from a White Castle. A White Castle in Omaha. Ignorant I can stomach, but stupid's somethin else."

Carol flicked a long ash on the remains of her sandwich. When she saw what she'd done, she covered it with her napkin. "What did he say when you asked him about it?"

"Ask? Didn't ask a thing. I walked back into that house with the earring on my finger and handed him the sack. Then I reached into the buffet drawer for the gun and put one slug in the dinin room wall. Missed him by a foot, but I sure scared the hell out of him. Only said one thing. Benny, I said, you may be half Comanche, but I ain't being scalped in my own house."

Carol just stared. We argue, she thought. George and I argue a lot, but the worst thing I ever did was break a centerpiece—and even then I didn't mean to do it. "Was that when you filed for divorce?"

"Nope," said Jean turning to look out the window as if something very painful were passing behind her eyes. "That was about two years later when there wasn't nuthin to fight about anymore. We just didn't care. Ain't over if you can still fight." She took a deep breath, turned back toward the table and pulled herself up straight in the chair. "So I got me some trainin, and me and the kids are doin fine. Got my friend if I get lonely, and I got myself. Yup, he feels real bad, my friend, but there's nuthin we can do. Time's not right. Says he'll give me the money."

"Money?" said Carol. "Well I can see taking something. You probably don't even have any of your stuff left. I know right after Billy got into kindergarten I had a garage sale and just got rid of it all—stroller, crib, playpen"

Jean sat shaking her head. "Girl, you ain't listenin. Only playpen I ever intend to see again is if I get me a waterbed. Said he'd pay for that too come to think of it."

"You don't mean"

"Got no choice. No choice at all." Jean picked up the check and pulled a twenty from her wallet.

"You don't have to do that," said Carol reaching for the check. "It's my turn."

Jean looked at the bill. "Treat's on him, girl. No choice at all." She snapped her purse shut. "And if he don't come through, maybe they take BankAmericard."

V

The clinic was a one-story building of charcoal brick. Paint peeled from the gutters. Carol couldn't help glancing at it as she pulled into the closest parking space. There was just something about peeling paint that bothered her. She made a mental note to remind George about the back porch.

"Lock your doors," said Jean flipping up her collar against the cold. "Never can tell in the city—not even in daylight." Carol was notoriously bad about locking doors. Where she came from it just didn't seem necessary.

They walked across the lot only too aware of the gravel crunching under their feet. Double plate-glass doors loomed larger. On one of the doors a sign had been taped: Push Hard—Door Sticks.

The waiting room was packed. Good lord, thought Carol. It must be a regular epidemic. No place to sit; not two together. They leaned against a wall, and Carol started to giggle. Jean looked at her the way Carol's mother used to when she chewed gum in church.

"No, I mean it's not that anything's really funny. I was just thinking how crowded it is, and I thought what a landoffice business this must be; then I noticed most of the people here are men. The old gentleman on crutches is obviously not pregnant."

"Obviously," said Jean, and the corners of her mouth turned up. Carol felt good having made her friend smile. They'd hardly spoken since Carol picked her up. Jean had been sitting on her front porch—

in the cold—waiting. Not like them at all to be so quiet.

It wasn't five minutes when the nurse called Jean's name. They walked up to the desk together. "Mrs. Rogers?" Jean nodded. "Two-hundred forty-five dollars," said the voice under the white cap. She didn't even look up from the form she was filling out. "Preferably cash."

Jean took a white envelope from her purse and counted it out slowly. "Ten, twenty, thirty . . . two-hundred forty, two-hundred forty-five." The nurse reached up for the stack of bills and quickly recounted it.

"Through the doors to your right," said the nurse pointing, "first left down to the end of hall and give your name to the nurse at the next station."

"Can I bring my friend?" said Jean stuffing the empty envelope back into her purse.

"Only as far as the next waiting room," said the nurse ripping the carbons from the form.

The corridor seemed a mile long stretching to nowhere. Their steps echoed, and Carol began carefully tiptoeing, avoiding places where tiles joined. At the end of the tunnel a room began to open, and Carol saw another high counter. On one of its corners was a tiny plastic tree trimmed with red satin balls. She suddenly realized the Muzak wasn't playing its usual "Spanish Eyes" or "Begin the Beguine." The sounds in her ears focused. "Away in a manger, no crib . . ." It was the first Christmas song she could ever remember. Grampa used to play it on the guitar. The best part was when he'd hold her on his lap and made the chords while she strummed . . .

" . . . so if you'll just leave your coat and purse with your friend and come with me. Miss? Madam? If you'll just be seated. Miss?"

Carol felt her body jerk like it does when you're almost asleep and the jerk wakes you up. She was standing in another waiting room. Another nurse in a different cap was tapping her shoulder. Another room? Carol couldn't remember how she got there. The high counter with the little tree was on her left. She must have walked down the hall and turned right. Followed the directions. It was the only thing that made sense.

"Guard my coat, girl," said Jean. "\$23.88 at Penney's and not about to be replaced until my ship comes in. Same goes for the purse. If you feel like cuttin out, I figure what's in it'll get you downtown and back—if you like ridin buses." Jean turned and followed the nurse through two brown doors with little rectangular windows at the top. The glass had a layer of fine mesh and reflected nothing.

Carol sat down in a molded plastic chair. It was bright green, and she knew the minute she settled herself that it hadn't been molded for a shape anywhere near resembling her own. Her back started to ache almost immediately. I should have brought a book, she thought. Never do I go to a doctor's office without a book.

The nurse returned through the brown doors, walked to the high counter and flicked a switch. The little plastic tree started to revolve. Carol stared as if mesmerized. Its base was a music box, and it tinkled a dissonant "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" totally out of sync with Muzak's "Silent Night." This is ridiculous, she thought. Absolutely ridiculous. She forced herself to look away.

The entrance to the room was framed with wrought-iron trellises. Stiff black vines wound their way from the acid-green carpeting to the acoustical tile ceiling. Draped on an over-sized leaf on the left side of the trellis was a length of fat yellow plastic chain. It looked just long enough to stretch across the opening, like at the first-run movies when they keep you back to clear the theater before the next feature.

The walls were off-white, and a rippled canvas daubed with red and yellow circles hung directly across from her—chin-high to a giraffe. Had to be a man, thought Carol. Never met a man yet who knew how to hang a picture.

Her eyes reached a spot in the corner right next to the brown doors. Smoked mirror tiles met about a third of the way from the ceiling down, six tiles in each direction. She counted them. A stark chrome chandelier reflected in the tiles and down on a statue sitting on a blue parson's table. Carol squinted and recognized Rodin's "Thinker." Just sitting there, she said to herself. Sitting there in the nude with his elbow on his knee, chin on his fist, concentrating on a spot about three inches past his big toe.

Deliberately avoiding the brown doors Carol counted four dark stains in the carpeting from the parson's table to the chair where she was sitting. Turning to her left she looked up at a swag lamp. It was a cluster of fuschia lucite grapes suspended on a brass chain. Wisps of dust danced from it as the heat came on. Under the grapes was another statue—the classic Graecian maiden with a water jug on her shoulder. The statue perched on a tiny Italian Provincial cigarette table. Looks tippy, she thought. Very tippy. The maiden's head tilted toward the jug. Around her neck was a hairline crack. Dried glue oozed out here and there.

Carol was not alone. Just past the maiden with the mended neck sat a young girl. She looked no more than eighteen, but Carol never trusted her ability to judge age. So hard to tell, she thought. Everybody wears jeans; but she has such shiny hair, and her face is beautiful even without make-up. The girl met her gaze. Carol quickly turned the other way. It's not polite to stare—at somebody. But she had noticed the neck. The girl had a long, slender neck. Very smooth. Eighteen, thought Carol. Twenty at the most. The girl lifted one leg up over the arm of a red director's chair and drummed a flip-top box of Marlboros on the maiden's bare feet. Sullenly she glanced over her left shoulder, and her brow creased as her eyes fixed on the No Smoking sign.

They sat silently, the two of them. Carol wished the girl would speak, break the silence; but she just sat there pushing back her cuticles. Then the girl wound a strand of her hair around her forefinger and slowly brought it across to her mouth.

The brown doors opened, and a young girl in faded denims and a Superman t-shirt walked briskly toward the girl with the hair in her mouth. They put on identical sheepherder's jackets, all the while bowing and bending toward each other to exchange nods and muted comments. Carol couldn't really hear what was said, and she definitely wasn't eavesdropping. It was only the tailend of the last sentence, and maybe she was mistaken. Something about not missing the ski trip to Aspen.

Carol's watch said time had passed, but she was still sure it had stopped and must have just started ticking again when she held it up to her ear. She walked over to the nurse's station and checked. It had not stopped.

On the chair where the girl had been sitting she noticed magazines. It felt like a reprieve until she checked the titles. Four back issues of "Golfer's Digest." She tried the director's chair, and it was no more comfortable than the molded plastic. Crossing her legs she began pushing back her cuticles. It was something to do.

The brown doors opened again. It was a nurse. She beckoned to Carol and said, "Your friend, she's almost ready to get dressed. You can wait in here and just go out the side door."

Carol put on her coat but didn't button it. She picked up Jean's jacket and the two purses and followed the nurse. As the brown doors closed behind her, the Muzak stopped with the second brush of the air readjusting itself. There was a heavy, medicinal closeness to the short hallway. "Have a seat," said the nurse.

Against the beige walls were three chairs. Three chairs in a brown leatherette with the vinyl peeling from the fabric backing. They squatted on their tubular frames as if well aware they'd been relegated from the limelight. Must have been out front at one time—when they were new. Carol sat down and put Jean's coat and the two purses on the chair next to her. At least these chairs were more comfortable. Not as modern, but suited to the body's needs. She wiggled to find a spot where her back didn't hurt.

Surgery—No Admittance. Carol read a sign on two more brown doors in front of her. The whole place felt like a Chinese puzzle. There was another nurse's station but no Christmas tree. No decorations at all. The only thing on the counter was a small metal tray. On the tray were three plastic cups—little cups, like you get ice cream in. Ice cream sundaes. It was a treat to get an ice cream sundae; even if you did have to eat it with a little wooden paddle, and almost all you tasted was the wood. Carol squinted. Strawberry. Strawberry sundaes. That was nice, she thought. Must be for quick energy like the orange juice you get after you give blood. She hoped strawberry was Jean's favorite.

A nurse walked past and picked up the tray. As she walked toward Carol with the array of sundaes, Carol squinted harder. Every cup had a lid and a label stuck on with adhesive tape. There was writing in ballpoint. All the cups looked the same, but every label said something different. A different name. Carol felt a pain and looked down. Her hands were gripping the chrome arms of the chair. Funny—her nails had made her palms bleed.

"Taxi?" Jean leaned against the doorframe on Carol's left. She made her old familiar smile and never moved a muscle except her mouth. Just stood there.

Carol got up and reached toward her. "Need help, lady?" She could see Jean wasn't sure she could move.

"One arm. Just let me rest on one arm. We'll go out that door, and if I just have one arm, I can make it. No sense fallin down now and breakin a leg or something."

"Have we got everything?" Carol asked buttoning her coat. It wasn't a place she ever wanted to have to see again.

"Gimme the jacket—purse—got the two prescriptions; one for antibiotics, one for pain. What say we get the hell outta here."

Carol held the door and a blast of wind and natural light hit them as they looked out at the parking lot. So different from a new angle.

Actually, they were closer to the car than when they'd gone in the front entrance. Very convenient and totally unplanned.

They walked to the car. Carol opened the door, and Jean sat down carefully. "Got something for you," said Carol walking around the car to slide into the driver's seat. "Didn't have time to give it to you before the way you were sitting on the front porch waiting when I pulled in. Think you were getting married or something?" Immediately she felt foolish. "I'm sorry. That wasn't funny."

"Funny? Girl, you don't know what's funny. Let's see the present. Ain't nuthin Jean likes like presents. Can't remember when I got a present last—not for nuthin."

Carol handed her the small package childishly wrapped in plain white tissue paper. No ribbon. Just a little scotch tape holding it together. Scotch tape and a little blue lint. Roll must have fallen on the rug.

Jean held the package turning it over in her palms as if opening it would spoil the surprise. "Know what? I'm tired of all the hanger-onners. No more of them people who just keep taking parts of Jean. From now on, for them people, I ain't home. It's gonna be me first, and I'm gonna do things that make me feel good." She slowly opened the top of the package. "Pearls!"

"Just pretend," said Carol.

Jean peeled the rest of the paper from the ornament and let it dangle from her finger by its invisible nylon thread. "Pearls." The ornament turned slowly. "Pearls and horses. . . . just like Riverside Park. My ma and dad used to take me, and I'd ride and ride. Ride that carousel. Almost caught the brass ring once. Little bit longer arms, and I'd a caught it. I remember how I cried. Ma told me it was nuthin anyway. Just pretend. By the time my arms was long enough, I knew it was kid stuff. Pretend." She crooked her finger back and forth making the horses circle faster and faster; then her finger jerked to a halt, and the ornament spun and reversed, unwinding until it hung motionless. "You think it was really alive?"

Carol braked for a red light, and they sat looking at each other. "I ain't doin in again," said Jean. "Next time, and there ain't gonna be no next time, I just have it. Have it and starve, but . . . You remind me if I ever sound sloppy again. Even partial sloppy. Ain't no fuck in the world worth this." She crooked her finger, and the horses swung crazily, as if they weren't even following each other.

"You got a whole tree full of these things?"

"Almost," said Carol. "There's just a whole bunch of kits you can buy—different kinds, different colors."

"And you got a real tree? Said you had a real tree. On the phone. Me and the kids got a little plastic one with all gold satin apples. Had the same thing for years."

"Well, we do," said Carol, "but the tree's not all that terrific. It sticks out a little on one side, and it's mostly the jewelled ornaments, but we have other decorations—stuff from bread dough, junk the kids made at school, the paper chain Michele and I made when she was three, and"

"And next year, you just see, girl. Next year I'm gonna be snowmobiling and skiing—stop at the drugstore. Got to fill these prescriptions."

Carol did it for her. Twenty dollars.

They pulled into Jean's driveway. "Time for one coffee?" Carol hesitated and said she'd love it.

As they walked in the front door, Carol saw the tree. Plastic with all gold satin apples. It was small and symmetrical and lifeless. Jean hung the ornament on it, and the horses danced crazily. No sense. No place.

Jean stepped back, looked and said, "I know. Don't fit. Not on plastic. But wait. Just you wait. Wait and see next year. I'm gonna have me a real tree."

Karen Jackson

THE WET BLANKET

Honoring the memory of Robert Benchley

There's nothing like a sudden downpour to throw a wet blanket on one's joviality (excepting, of course, the wet blanket itself, or the sudden appearance of a flashing police light in one's speeding rear-view mirror). It is axiomatic that flash storms always come at inappropriate moments. So I'll not dwell here on the ruined picnics, drowned lakeside strolls, and tender, soft-summer-night embraces which have been interrupted by cat-and-dog showers.

I will dwell, instead, on the times when the weather waits until I am just crossing the street with an armload of freshly washed and dried clothes and then begins, not with the pitter-patter of gentle April, but with the gusty gales of a Joseph Conrad sea story.

I can be singing merrily as I fold my clothes at my neighborhood laundromat (or any laundromat, for that matter) and be completely unconcerned with the world at large (or in prison). I press my face into the fresh-smelling towels, the bleached and softened sheets, the fluffy pullovers, and I smile benignly at the cute little rascals whose mothers seem not to notice that their chocolate smeared fingers are spotting up my folding table.

But, if I look outside and those all-too-familiar, ominous broods of dark clouds blot out the sun (nice cliche), I change immediately. My gaze glazes over; the cute little rascals become grubby little urchins; the fragrance of the towels becomes the noisome odor of ammonia; and the salubrious, cheerful environment of steam and bleach and enzyme pre-soaks becomes an ecological disaster area.

I know that, no matter how long I wait nor how soon I leave nor how fast I run, the rain will catch me in midstreet. I once puttered around for an hour and a half after I had finished the folding, memorizing the washing instruction placards, changing dollar bills into quarters, quarters into dimes and nickels, and nickels into dimes which I then sold to other customers (real ones who wanted to wash) for more dollar bills so I could start over, waiting for the cloud to burst.

It never did.

It never did, that is, until I gave up trying to outw(a)it Mother Nature (it's not nice anyway, they say) and made a mad dash for home. I made it—halfway. Never was there such a furious outpouring of wind and water as buffeted and drenched me that day. It was as though the Old Gal, with whom I've never been on very good terms, were trying to teach me a lesson.

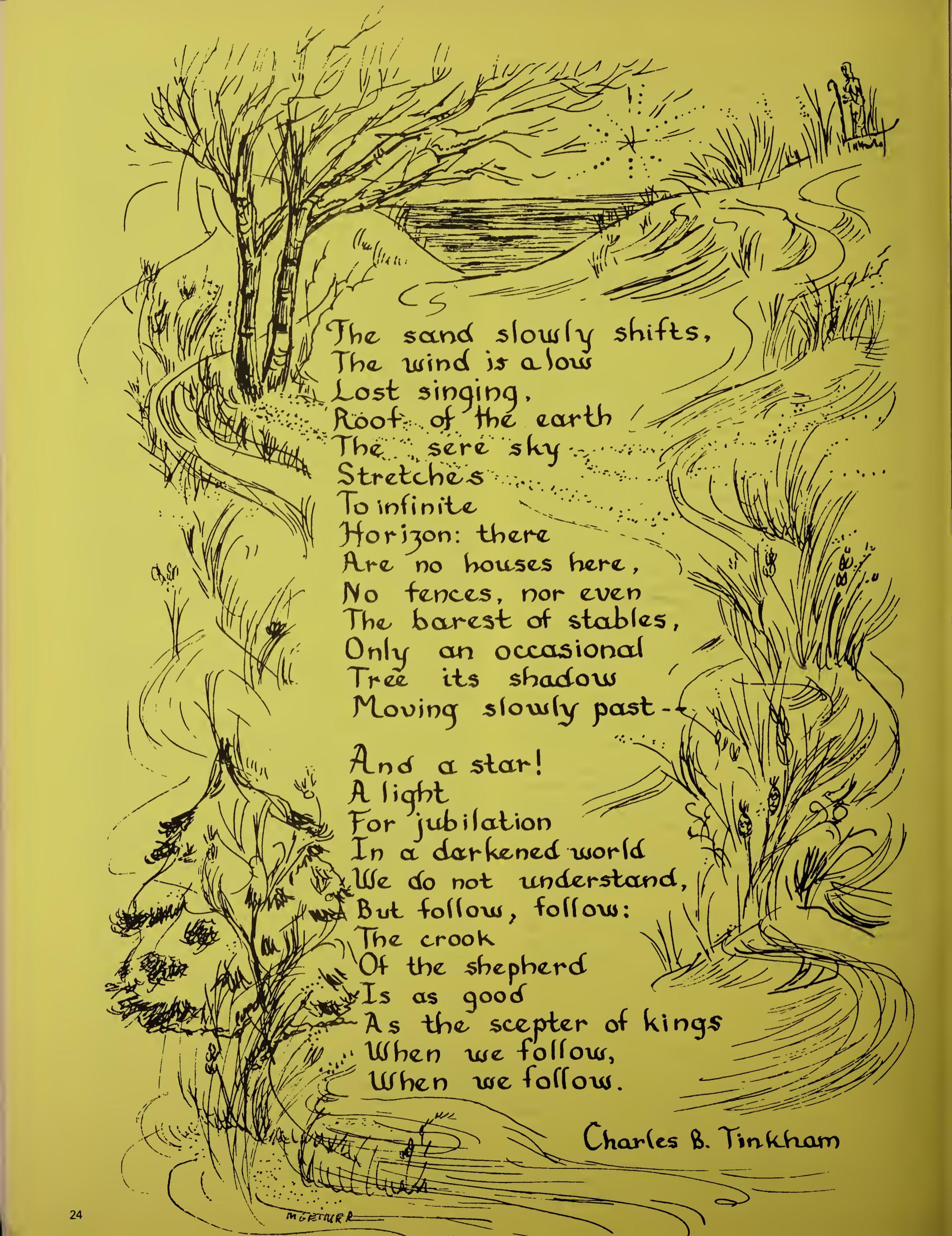
I have finally learned my lesson. I have never again tried to wait out a storm. I can't, for I haven't the patience. Once a storm has me in its sights (which are always trained on my laundromat) I may as well give up and take my medicine like a good boy. In fact, I find the storms are always less ferocious when I don't try to outsmart them, but blunder ahead as if I didn't know they were lurking outside getting their big buckets ready for me.

Some people have trouble with rain when they wash their cars. The old cliche for those lucky fellows is the plaintive (almost whiny), "Every time I wash my car, it rains." It's always sunny and remains so when I wash my car. But let me try to cross a street with a basketful of clean laundry and "Hell hath no fury"

Paul Wray

A knife-edge flashed in the moonlight. The hum of backyard air-conditioners stifled the scream. The roses were crushed. At 1:00 a.m., an ambulance streaked down the alley, but didn't stop. Nobody cared.

Mark Pavlovich



The sand slowly shifts,
The wind is a low
Lost singing,
Root of the earth
The sere sky
Stretches
To infinite
Horizon: there
Are no houses here,
No fences, nor even
The barest of stables,
Only an occasional
Tree its shadow
Moving slowly past--

And a star!
A light
For jubilation
In a darkened world
We do not understand,
But follow, follow:
The crook
Of the shepherd
Is as good
As the scepter of kings
When we follow,
When we follow.

Charles B. Tinkham

The Geriatrics of Mr. Benson

Probing down into the depths of his ocean treasure of books, wood scraps, and bits of cloth, the old man searched for the mizzen mast for the barkatine he was putting together. After this unsuccessful hunt of his desk, the old man, in a slow and exaggerated seaman's gait, straddled over to the other side of the small room to his bunk, which served as a storage cubicle for his clothes and all sorts of paraphernalia during the day time. The search here also did not turn up the mast.

The old man then stopped and tried to think of where else he might have laid the mast—his sea chest at the foot of the bunk? No! that strictly contained the momentos of his departed wife who had been as dear to him as the sea. He knew without even looking that the mast would not be there because that chest was the one and only thing in his life that was kept in shipshape order.

How about the shelving then? Well, that only contained his finished boats and ships that were floating in a dusty sea. A quick scrutiny of the deck revealed waves of old junk mail and classical records. The old man then eyed one of these records spinning around on the record player on the floor, but no mast. Except for the bathroom, that was all that was left in the apartment.

Since he saw that this attempt was in vain, he sat down at his desk and began pulling out cloth, thread, and needle. He first had to find the needle-threader before making the new mast since his older eyes would no longer cooperate in guiding the thread through the eye of the needle. His hands, however, were still adept in sewing such a small item. In fact, his fingers were sewing in time to the quick tempo of the record that was playing. His body also rocked back and forth according to the beat because his mind had taken in this rolling melody and put him back on board ship again. If anyone had been watching this scene they would have thought the old man to be like the patients at mental institutions who sit and rock themselves all day long.

Meanwhile, the old man came back to land when a frantic pounding noise at his door awakened him from his pastime. The old man was so startled that he forgot his seaman's gait as he scurried to the door.

As he opened the door, his son grabbed him by the shoulders and began shaking him as he commanded, "Where the hell have you been? Are you all right? You scared me when you didn't answer the door."

In an attempt to compose himself and temper his anger, the old man told his son to come in and then closed the door in as relaxed a manner as possible.

"Well, Tom, sorry if I scared ya, but you know how it is when I get busy—everything else gets tuned out."

"What could you be busy doing at your age? Ah, never mind. Let's just forget about it, okay? The important thing is that your okay. You know that's what I'm here about. Lisa and I've"

"Oh, here. Don't just stand there, come on and sit down. Oh, you'd better let me move those things first—sorry about that."

As the old man picked up a bundle of these clothes, the tiny mizzen mast revealed itself from beneath. With a satisfied grin he snatched up the mast.

With a look of disgust, Tom sat down and then eyed his father suspiciously as the old man dropped the clothes on the floor and allowed the one piece of cloth to absorb his thoughts.

"Dad, please listen to me! I've got a reason for being here today."

"Oh, and just what's that?"

"Lisa and I are worried about you living here all alone. We hate to think of you sitting here in loneliness with nothing to do."

"I manage just fine, Tom."

"Come on, Dad, how about leaving here and living with us? We've got it all planned, you'll have your own room and privacy will come with it. Of course, you'll have to eat with us, but other than that we'll let you to your own affairs. Just think, you'll never have to be lonely again."

"I don't know, Tom. First of all I'm not lonely, and besides, I just have to be my own person."

"But we've promised to respect your privacy."

"I don't mean being my own person strictly in that sense. It's just that all my life I've paid my own way and I can't see changing my life now."

"Well, if you feel that strongly Lisa and I will accept room and board from you. Let's face it, Dad, you've been starving on that measly government check you get each month. It's not enough to make ends meet. Now, if you come with us we'll see to it that you get everything you need and want for a minimal charge, and we'll even see to it that you get a little spending money too."

"You're very generous, but I don't like being a charity case."

"But, Dad, it's costing us more for you to live the way you are now! Why do you think the landlord hasn't bothered you for the back rent you owe him? He would have evicted you if it weren't for us."

The newly found mast which the old man had been fondling was suddenly crumpled in his clenched hand.

"Now wait just one minute! I pay my own way. The landlord's just been helping me out because he knows that money is a little tight for me right now. He knows I pay my way."

"Come on now Dad and calm down. I didn't mean for it to sound as though you don't manage your money. Look at the facts, though—you budget your money beautifully, but your check isn't increasing while your rent, food, and everything else is. So even though you do a good job of managing, it's just not enough anymore. That's why we've been trying to help out. The only problem is that it's coming to too much for us also."

"I didn't realize what you've been doing. You should have told me earlier. Let me pay it back to you. I don't exactly know how or when, but I'll find a way."

"You don't owe us anything, Dad. We're your children so we're happy to do whatever we can—we owe it to you. But, if you lived with us we'd be able to make it then—you'd be helping us out."

"Well, I guess if moving in with the family will make things easier for you it's my duty to do so. I just want to do what's right by my family. When do you want me?"

"Why don't you start packing now while I go and tell Lisa so she can get your room ready."

Caught up in a typhoon of emotion and salesman's talk, the old man could not say a word before his son was out the door. He was only aware of the phonograph again, and turned to watch its needle winding slowly toward the end of its track and a tear moistened his eye as he came to realize that he was leaving this faithful ship.

By the time the old man had regained composure and could begin to gather his things, Tom was already flying through the front door of his home. He hastened through the immaculately clean, but gaudily furnished living room to where he knew his wife would be—in the kitchen. Sneaking up, Tom gave her a love pat on the rump and asked her what was for dinner.

"I hope you don't mind dear, but we're having leftovers. This way I'll have more time tonight with you before the Women's League meeting."

"I'd rather you spent time cooking for a change—it's leftovers from a can to begin with."

"Oh Tom, please don't start again. You were the one who thought it'd be nice for me to get involved in our community. To be involved takes time."

"Couldn't you be involved without being so active?"

"I'm trying dear. Please give me a chance. Besides, if you don't complain tonight, I promise to not only give you a home-cooked meal but also a little cheesecake afterwards."

"Hubba! Hubba!"

"Tom, I don't mean to change the subject, but did you tell your father the decision he has to make?"

"Lisa, he's accepted to live with us. I didn't even have to mention a thing about the old folks' home. As soon as I asked him to move in with us he jumped at the opportunity."

"You mean you didn't have to tell him it was here or St. Mary's rest home? I thought for sure his pride wouldn't allow him to accept your first offer. I was certain you would make it an either-or situation."

"No, I think he's been lonely so he was happy with our proposal."

"That's a big relief. Now there won't be such a big money headache for you anymore."

"Yes! Isn't it nice the way things turn out?"

No sooner said, Tom was off to the bedroom calling for Lisa to follow. As Lisa took off her apron and began responding to his call, she muttered: "Yes! Isn't it nice the way some people always get their way?"

So the old man had said goodby to his beloved room of wonderful chaos and disarrangement and entered the companionable home of his son.

It was true that the old man had privacy!

Lisa and Tom were quite happy to see the old man conform to a routine life of relaxation and comfort. He would busy himself in his room during the day, with what they didn't know and didn't bother to ask, ate supper with them, watched t.v. with the family in the evening, and retired at a reasonable hour. They were sure the old man

was happy to lead such a carefree life and they didn't have too much to complain about. Of course, once in a while the old man might get in the way, but at least it was cheaper to have him putter around there rather than his old apartment.

So life continued at its normal pace for the Benson's. Tonight was a little different than normal though, because Lisa had fixed a special supper for grandpa's one month anniversary.

"That was a nice supper tonight, Lisa. I think I'll watch some t.v. with you all now."

"Oh, sorry Dad, but tonight Lisa and I have bowling, but Tom'll enjoy your company."

"Grandpa, do you mind just taking the t.v. set into your room this evening?"

"Why don't you want to watch t.v., Junior?"

First of all, my name's Tom—and please don't call me Junior anymore in front of anybody. And it just so happens that since you moved in, my desk has been moved from our study into the living room. The desk can't fit into my room because everything from our old room has been stuffed into mine, just so you could have a private room. You can understand, can't you Grandpa? It's hard to do homework with the t.v. blasting away."

"I'm sorry about the trouble I've caused. Whatever will make you happy—I. . . . I'll just stay in my room."

Grandpa Benson hobbled from the kitchen with stooped shoulders to the living room. By the time he reached the t.v. set, however, self-respect straightened his shoulders and he picked up the set with the least sign of stress. He carried the set as such into his room and placed it on top of the chest of drawers which reflected his image. He looked around the room to see where an outlet was for the chord. He pulled out his bed which was absent of anything except clean white sheets and neatly tucked-in blankets. There was an outlet there, but the cord was too short to reach it. He pushed the bed back and started to go for an extension cord, but he stopped as he remembered that Lisa and Tom would be busy getting ready to leave and that Junior—or rather Tom, didn't want to be disturbed. Instead, he hobbled with bent shoulders over to the rocking chair and sat down to think like he often did during the day.

Even with an inactive body, thoughts were still racing through his active mind, "There must be something I can do—build a model ship? No. I haven't any materials because I haven't gone to the store lately. And besides, Lisa doesn't like me working with glue here in the bedroom. Gotta find something to occupy my thoughts, then. I'd use to look through my sea chest at times like this, but it's in the attic now with all old things. I guess that's where I belong too."

At this thought, he leaned over, turned the light out, and closed his eyes. Now both his body and mind were inactive as sleep came to the old man.

At first when Grandpa Benson had awakened, he wasn't sure whether it was still evening or if he had slept all night in the chair. He soon found out as he opened the curtains and sunlight came flowing in. He was about to go back to his chair and wait until the call for breakfast as he had been doing every morning for the past month, when the warm sunshine, which felt good to his stiffer than normal bones, gave him an idea. The old seaman's gait was back as he sauntered off through the house. Just as he reached the door, Lisa in rollers and housecoat came running out from the bathroom.

"Where are you going? I was just coming to tell you that I won't be serving breakfast this morning because I want to finish my housework early. You know me, always busy, busy."

"That's okay! There's nothing I like better than a brisk walk in the morning—more so than breakfast even. I'll see you in a bit, Lisa."

"Grandpa, please wait! Don't go out by yourself. I'd never be able to live with myself if something happened to you. Couldn't you wait 'till I'm finished with my housework? I'll go for a walk with you then."

"Well, I'm fit! But it would be nice to have someone along."

"Fine. Why don't you go to your room so you won't be in my way while I'm cleaning. I'll come for you when I'm ready."

Back in his room, Grandpa Benson was to eager to just sit. As he heard the kitchen water running he decided that he could help Lisa and make her happy by cleaning his room as she would. That way she would get done sooner and they could go for their walk. Besides, why shouldn't he do her a favor since she could be so sweet to him.

After tucking in the blankets in Lisa's fashion, the old man even used his shirt sleeve to wipe a smudge off of the polished dresser. Now there were no marks to obstruct his smiling reflection. He sat there and listened to the vacuum cleaner sweeping away.

Grandpa Benson was startled as the doorbell broke into the now quiet, steady hum of the scrub brush. Before he could get up out of the chair, it was obvious that Lisa had answered the door since the scrubbing tune was replaced by a buzzing of voices and laughter.

The old man was sure of what was going on. He calculated that Lisa had continued her cleaning into the bathroom, for he could now hear the water running in there, while the visitor remained and continued to chatter.

Grandpa Benson went into a day dream of his past chatterings when he suddenly realized that the sounds of cleaning and voices had stopped. He sat in his chair, staring into the void of his room and listening! But there were no sounds. Still listening—but nothing.

This lack of sound continued for several hours as the old man sat in his chair just listening. This record of soundlessness gradually crept into the old man's unbelieving mind, and as he got up to look out his door a tear fell onto his dirt-smudged sleeve.

"Is anybody home? Lisa, did you call me?"

On the table he found a note from Lisa to Tom Jr.:

"I'm out shopping with Debbie next door. There's pop and chips in the usual place—help yourself. Don't disturb Grandpa, you know how he likes his privacy. See you soon!"

The old man's face burned red as he mimicked: "you know how he likes his privacy."

"That's right! I like privacy."

With this thought, Mr. Benson went outside for a ladder. When he came in with it his face was a deeper red as he put it in place to get into the attic. With heart pounding and wheezing lungs, the old man ascended, drug his sea chest across the rafters, and slowly, painfully in delight he descended with the chest.

Now Mr. Benson's face was white as he sat in his room looking at the things he had taken out of the chest: glue, old mementos, and several books. He sat in his chair, pale white with eyes wide open, and just stared.

Meanwhile, Lisa had met Tom after work and they came home together. They found their son Tom pounding on Grandpa's door, screaming.

"Are you okay? Please let me in Grandpa. It's me—Junior."

Lisa and Tom approached their son to find out what was wrong. As he pointed to the open attic door and the ladder that lay on the floor with several of its rungs strewn about, Tom Jr.'s frightened tune was tripled by the sorrowful chantings of his parents.

Rabbit

Caught in the sudden glare of my headlights,
the rabbit stands transfixed
as if the light were a burst of arctic cold.

I swerve
and wonder at the fear that freezes.

Paul Wray

Urban
Crowded, dirty
Hating, competing, hurrying
Skyscraper, suburb, field, barn
Enjoying, inviting, relaxing
Spacious, clean
Rural

Thomas Ortyl

suspended in time;
(stop)
grasp memories
while we can

the past is spent
do we remember?
(stop think)
the future is too removed
to worry about
life goes on

we're here, we're now
100 years we're not
what we do tomorrow
can't be done without
what we do today
(stop think stop)
and do

Mark Pavlovich

THE CHOPPER

Muscles sore
From hours of work.
Swinging this sharpened axe
Takes aim and strength.
A clean blow
Is a final blow
And soon the job will be done.
I'll take the short-cut
Through the eagle's woods
and past the devil's pond
To thick soup
Fresh baked bread.
I'll kiss my pretty wife's mouth
And play with my kids before bed.
I'll leave the memories in the square.
Let the others count
The heads.

David B. Porter

Terri's Feet

Terri's feet are just like mine
but smaller browner smoother
smell different
but sometimes the same
five toes on each foot
but she ain't got no hammer toe

she loves to take off her shoes
and dance and wade
and splash in the water

and that's the way it would be
even if she
were Vietnamese or Congolese or Viennese or Irish
and I were
Japanese or Pekinese or Siamese or Eskimo

as it is
she's Afro- and I'm Euro-
American
but not really

She's Terri and I'm John
her Nana is my wife Ollie
and that's that.

The greatest of changes

Death comes silent and deep
To an unexpected world
Taking all,
All but memories
Which fade, and come again
With each passing day
Bringing tears of love
Loneliness and sorrow

Doug Norris

OGALALA SIOUX NATION
(Ballad of an Old Sioux)

I stopped for gas along the road,
Where an old, old man was chanting,
"Oh where have all the shamans* gone?"
(His boney dog was panting)

The elders leaned against the wall,
For shade in the heat at mid-day.
"Oh where have all the shamans gone?"
I couldn't go on my way.

I sat beside the road that day,
Hot sun upon my back;
"Oh where have all the shamans gone?"
Dust reddened every shack.

"Oh where have all the shamans gone?
Who plowed the old trails under?
Across the plain and Great Divide,
My heart's been made to wander."

A tear slipped down along his cheek,
The wind choked back a sigh;
"Oh where have all the shamans gone?"
He searched around the sky.

The old ones sat there looking sad,
At dirty ribbons winding west,
"Oh where have all the shamans gone?
They taught our people all the best."

Beer cans rattle, dust devils spin,
Around that old gas station,
"Oh where have all the shamans gone?
Oh once we were a nation!"

He says his fathers did not choose,
To live on mud-flats baking,
"Oh where have all the shamans gone?"
Did they know his heart was breaking?

Before the setting sun was gone,
I left that old gas station,
On dirty ribbons winding west,
Across my very own nation.

Oh long, long, from that brutal day,
My memory still burns:
"Oh where have all the shamans gone?"
The red dust still returns.

*A medicine man. A wise man.

Tombstones—either marble or granite—
Or simply white crosses foretelling the sign of death.

Those who occupy their cold dark graves—
Unaware of who lies beside them or hovers above.

To be buried and soon forgotten—
Amidst countless others who lie in their unforeseen fate.

Beneath the earth they lie in waiting—
Covered with the bloodied soil of former generations.

They are now at rest with our world—
If they reappear in their glorified state is unknown.

We exist but for a short time—
Wasted hours today dissolve hope for tomorrow.

Few were ready to face extinction—
They must now walk between damnation and eternal life.

Death may well be man's final voyage—
A journey of expectations and new awakenings.

Steve Ramsey

Lonna Fullerton

Skid Row Bum

Once he made star billing
Fans thought him handsome and thrilling,
Luxurious home on a mountain
Overlooking L.A.
Raven-haired wife—so beautiful—so gay.
Then suddenly too much fame,
Too many things to blame.

I need not
Give you
These words,
This poem,
For you'll find it,
Know it,
Wherever your love
Is most alive,
When words cannot tell
What feeling says:

I shall leave it
By the rose mallow
In crimson light
Of the midsummer sun.

I shall leave it
Where trillium
Trails
Radiant white
Down a hillside
Of woods.

I shall leave it
Where the aspen grows
Trembling
April's twilight
To the glaze
Of elfin green.

I shall leave it
By ice caves
Of winter
Dreaming the blue
Of open spring skies.

I need not
Give you
These words,
This poem:
You will know it
By heart
Wherever love takes you.

Charles B. Tinkham

Matthew age four

Outside
when you play
the porch
is your limit
and yet
you sneak down
the dark
cement steps
the sky
steers your legs
lets you
run into trees
tearing
the old scab
straight off
of your nose.
I smile
as I watch
what blood
on your face
gets smeared
in the wind
when you
run to the next.

They whisper
"he's blind"
and I bellow
"so what?"

Barbara Hegg

ROSE K. JACOBSON

Now—sitting in a dimly lit room
On a rough wooden bench
Head bent, clothes ragged, unshaven,
He finds a rescue mission
His only haven.
Outside, no one knows him,
Who gives a care?
Only the good people inside
Who are willing to share.

The Encumbered Thought

Today was swept into oblivion.
Tomorrow another day of expectations.
The Future the period of my whole being.
Yesterday the diary of my thinking.

Amid the thought-Darkness reincarnates.
Entwined of the enraptured melody of the free magic,
a Nocturne dominates electricly the star of the eyes,
where upon the frozen sky is searched for
the realm of the spirits cry.

Making the Winter night sweep
centipedes of evening wonder—
a denoted subconscious obscurity of the sages of the ages—
a vague complexity of irresolute mental temperament.
That's all that lingers in space. . . .
That's all that cloister's in minds

Jesus Gutierrez

autumns crest

In peculiar forelight
Of dawn
Caught in the leaf
Of birch
And the aspen,
She walks each morning
Down to the river,
Slow mystery
In her biding step
Down to the turning river:

Her hair is the white
Of bridal wreath,
Her eyes are the dark
Of gypsy:
Across the silence
Of blue-flowered mint
She leaves
The spring
Of her going:

She is nameless to us
Except for the smile
That shyness of sun
brings
To slow light,
She is silent to us
Except for the whisper
That leaves
Of the birth
Touch green
To the prayer
Of her lips.

Charles B. Tinkham

glowing innocent eyes appear
waiting outside my window
I smell a fragrant scent
of falling leaves
and feel the warmth of fresh Indian
summer's air
a light scratch upon my window sill
tells me to come out
and enjoy with him
the freshly blowing autumn winds
filled with the rolling leaves
of southern air
oh, my little friend, you seem
to be so fascinated
by this sudden transformation
of warmth from yesterday
move closer, my little one
so I can rub your rigid back
and hear your gentle purring
now run to catch that floating
leaf
and live this day forever

Doug Norris

Titled by Chuck Essary

THE DITTY OF THE SNOW-SHOVEL

Why not let the
snow lie down and
rest a while?

Why this
urgency to
shove it off the sidewalk?

As if snow weren't
given to
make our lives pretty. But

business needs its
thoroughfares and
human urge won't

stop to fill with
silent beauty.
Ah well!

Such is the
way of the
middle-class city!

Roses rest on
thorns of green, but
sidewalks must be clean!

Lost
The cripple
snatched up
his
crutch
and
smashed it
across
a stone
and
Then
he
the cripple
stood
alone I
could do
as much
if only
I
could find
my
Crutch
Parnell Brennan

Michael Kulycky

THEY

They came running from the hills one day
Only trying to get away.
Gradually their cunning faltered—
Circumstance would not be altered.
Their heads were hung from oaken plaques,
Their antlers doubled as gun racks.
Heard of only in folklore
They, of course, exist no more.

In quest of shelter they all flew
To a bog or misty slough.
But this would not change their fate
Their offspring wouldn't live to mate.
Their beaks were worth their weight in gold
They were hunted, killed and sold.
Their remains are scattered on the forest floor
And they too, exist no more.

They stalked their prey amoung the hills
Until men came in search of thrills.
They were proud creatures of massive chest
Sleek and trim—their speed the best.
They they were no match for a gun
And its ruthless work was done.
Their skins were stretched across the floor
And they, like others, were no more.

And then the steel pushed the land
Supply, they said, must meet demand.
Trying only to live in style
The trash they left behind was vile.
They mined and dug and drilled and drained,
Until all the earthly goods were claimed
And their lives they now deplore
Because their landscape is no more.

Countless times I've told this story
How selfish men have said they're sorry.
But all of this won't change the past
Mother Nature's vote is cast
In their greed for thrills and money
There is no more "Land of Plenty"
They have taken from Nature's store
Until its stock exists no more.

You'd think that men would see the light
And try to change this dreadful plight.
If they continue to rape the earth
Just to get their money's worth.
What would happen then is dreary
So I, therefore, raise this query
Will they finally stop the war—
Or will they, too, exist no more?

Tom Stolarz

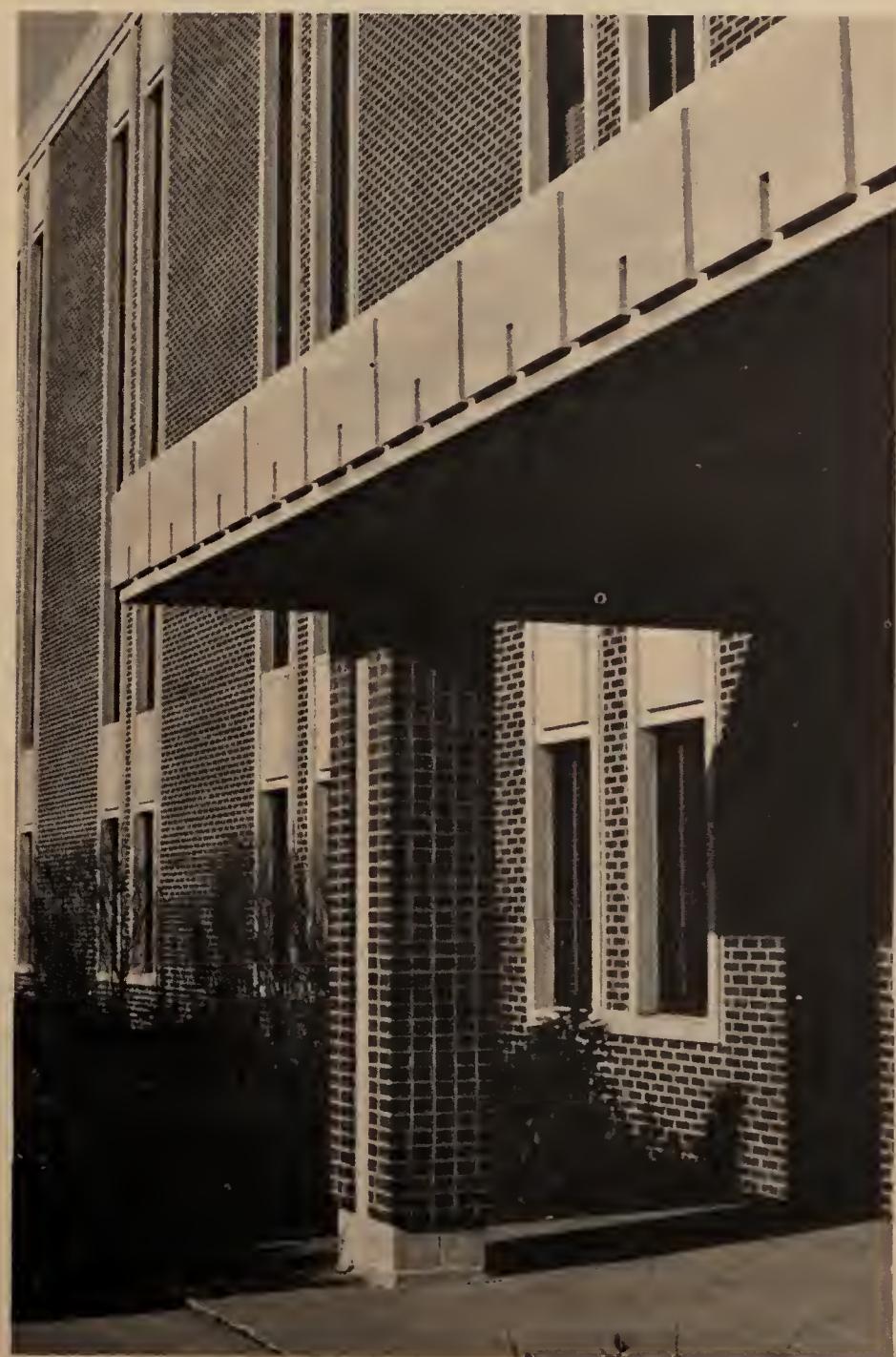
MY TIME

The soil that holds my hand
And the horizon's
Is like sand.
It's fine and whispers as my fingers
Let it sift back.

The mountains are far away.
One of them looks like a giant face
Turned skyward.
It is greyer than the rest;
Turning black.

The sun is setting.
The ground grows deeper scarlet
And the treeless plains
Say their wordless prayers.
My skin tingles
And I sense that it's also time
For me.

David B. Porter



Joel Janowski

from the younger side from the younger side from the younger

Music

Music lets you have not a care,
It looks like Chopin's underwear.
Good music has a boogie beat,
It also smells like Mozart's feet.
It moves like Joplin's Ragtime Sting,
I reckon he was a ragtime king.
It's a shame that Brahm has said good-bye,
His funeral song was his lullaby.
Beethoven had luck; he lived peacefully,
'Cause he couldn't hear his Fifth Symphony.
But he's quit composing, his mind would be wrong,
If he heard what that Murphy has done to his song.
Love songs feel like beauty's touching me,
But to reach someone's heart; well, there's only one key.
Just throw 'em some rock, if you're a believer,
They'll be yours forever if they get Boogie Fever.

Gwen Ashley
Middle School

As

As angels' tears from heaven,
As blessed bodies cry,
As snow drifts so silently,
As all is left to die,
As snow turns into puddles,
As the puddles disappear,
As warmth grows around the earth,
As now spring is here,
As wayward as the lulling breeze,
As hot days come and go,
As leaves start to redden,
As summer starts to go,
As chilly cold surrounds the earth,
As rain turns into snow,
As people seem so happy,
As this, soon all will go. . .

Alison Frak
Middle School

AND WE WONDER

As we trod off to the forbidden land,
We think about our days gone by
And we wonder
 Why?
As we near the forbidden land,
We eat the grapes—the grapes for wine
And we wonder
 Why?
As we remember the times that passed
And we wonder
 Why?
Now that we're at the forbidden land,
We drink the blood—the blood of man
And then we wonder
 Why?
As they trod off to the forbidden land,
They think about their days gone by
Then they wonder
 Why?

Renee Schwoegler
Middle School

WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

Happiness is Christmas
 And playing in the sun
 Way high on a hill
 Having fun.

Nancy Crim
Age 7

side from the younger side from the younger side from the younger

My Mom

I know when my mom is angry or mad,
That deep down inside she really is sad.
She thought that her children were growing to be a mistake,
And that they should learn to give and not so much as to take.
She wanted us to have manners and to be nice,
And before saying something to always think twice.
Now all she has to remember is that I love her for sure,
And when she's sad, all my hopes are for her.

Tawnia Jessie
Middle School

Alone

Alone
Alone is not just by yourself
Alone is inside
When you think no one cares
Or when time seems to stop
On sad moments
Alone is when you write a poem
And no one reads it.

Tammy Ann Black
Middle School

Evening

The night fills with darkness
as shadows of the moon contour the land.
Light escapes the earth.
Melodic hymns of crickets
sweep across the silence.
Rivers shine
as if threads of gold are woven
into the blackness of the sea.
Ebony carpeting covers
the vastness of the earth and
the moon shines through the trees
like a candle flame
flickering upon the land.
Darkness comes nearer.
Soon the tranquility of night
will be replaced
by the silent tracery of dawn.

Alison Frak
Middle School

I Need To Be Me

I have a right to speak of what's inside my mind,
I may feel quite happy, or sad, or mean, or kind.
I have a right to let folks know when I'm not feeling cool,
Why should I hide my sadness; I have no one to fool.
But then if I feel happy, I need to let it out,
I might make others happy; that's what happiness is about.
And when I love somebody, I need to let them know,
If they love me too, they'll stay; and if they don't, they'll go.
I cannot trap my feelings,
My feelings need to be free.
I can't lead someone else's life,
I just have to be me.

Gwen Ashley
Middle School

side from the younger side from the younger side from the you

Picturesque
Tall ships sailing.....
Out of the past.....
Into the present.....
New York Harbor.....

Jimmy's
in the White House.....
and
Gerry.....
is out.....

800 mile pipeline.....
America's
"Running fence".

Mao's gone.....
So is
Howard Hughes.....
And
Swine flu vaccines.....
Are here.

Bombs.....
As close as
LaGuardia Airport.....
As far
As Dublin.....
Terrorism.....
Here to stay?
Protestant
and
Catholic
Women.....
Together
in
Ireland.....
Praying
For Peace.

Africa's
Last citadel
of
Minority rule
Gone.

Breaker, Breaker.....
What's Your Handle?
10-4, Good Buddy!

Dazz, Dazz

Disco Jazz!

The "Bounce"

The "Bop"

Body Language
And

Errol Flynn.....

Gauchos.....
3-piece suits

Cowboy boots
And

Scarves

Now

That's Sharp!

Earthquake
After

Earthquake.....

Shock
After

Shock

Ruins
In

Italy, Guatemala

Turkey and China.....

Drought
in

Europe
and

America's
Midwest.....

The

Legionnaire's Disease

The
Fragility
of

Human
Life.

Elizabeth,
How's No. 7?

Barbara Walters

Getting
The
Green.

Ali and Inoki
"Fought"

To

A

Draw.....

Transsexual

Renee Richards.....

Trying

To make it
in

Tennis.....

and

Nadia

was

Perfect.

The
Booming
Movie
Business.....

T.V.
And

Cinema.....

Car Wash.....

Silver Streak
And

Gone With The Wind

And books?

Patty Hearst
Free?

Children
Kidnapped

Near Chowchilla.

The
Dailey "Machine"
is

Gone.....

Gary Gilmore's
in

Good condition

For

His

Self-requested
Execution.....

And

Our

Last-living
"Scottsboro Boy"

So Long
A

Symbol
of

American injustice

is finally

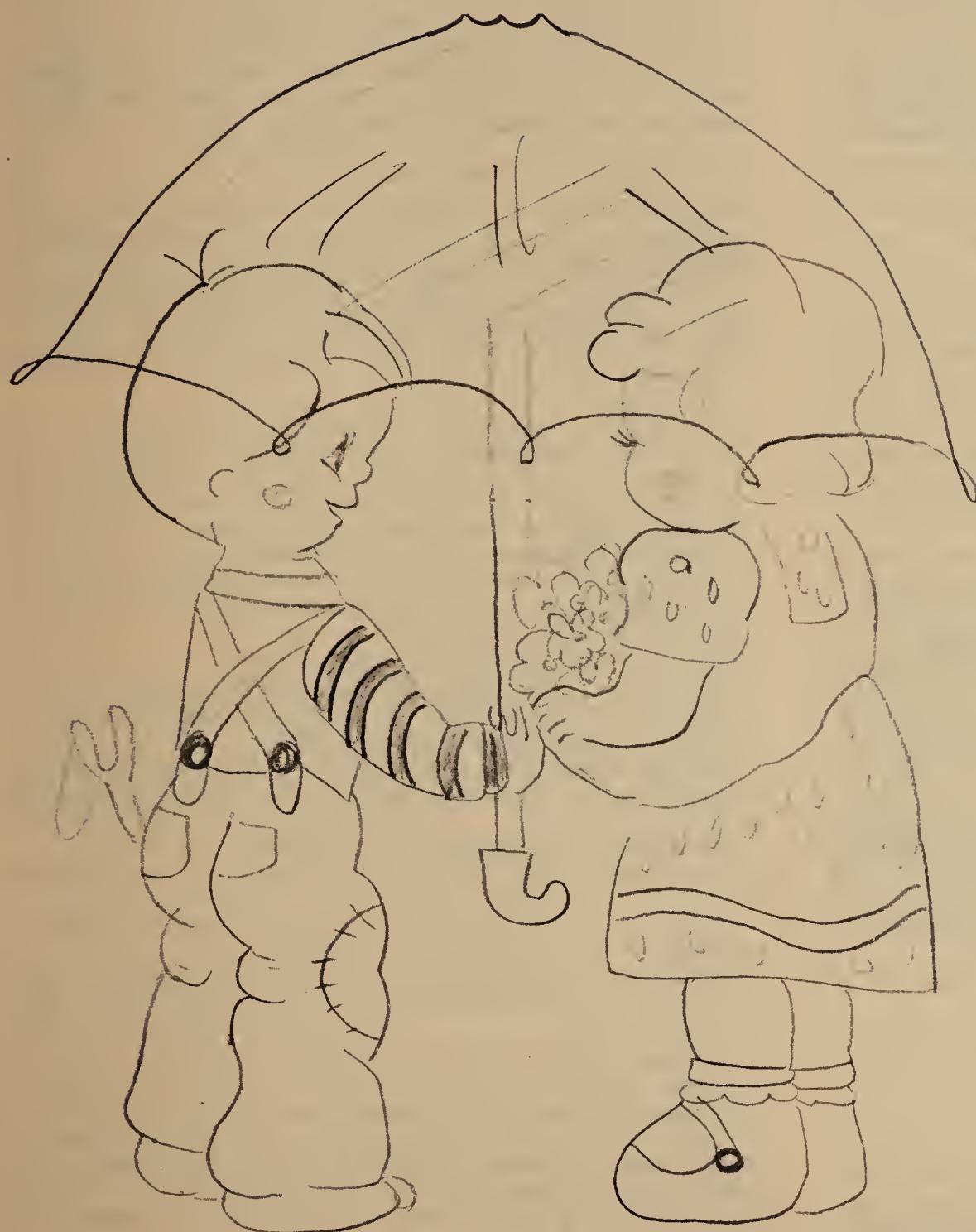
Finally.....

FREE.

"PICTURES".....
OF '76

Edna VaLerie Sherrell
Middle School

nger side from the younger side from the younger side from the



Tawnia Jessie

A Child

A child is a special thing,
Full of wonder, full of life,
Seeing the unseen, believing
the unbelievabe,
Natural and naive,
His future knows no bounds.

Lisa Ecsi
Middle School

CREATE

Build, construct, originate
forming, designing, inventing
cause, make-crash, waste
ruining, upsetting, wrecking
squash, destruct, demolish
DESTROY!

Sandy Larson
Middle School

The Mental Anguish of Living Next Door to Cindy Lou Payne

We girls on Catalpa Avenue never worried about the boy bully on our block—we didn't need to. What we did have to worry about was his female counterpart, who was 29,173 times worse. They operated on different levels. Our female bully flexed her muscles verbally. Her name was Cindy Lou Payne. And even now, despite the great expanse of time which separates that past from this present, I shudder at the mention of her name.

Cindy Lou Payne was skinny and tough and had dirty blonde hair (which in her teen-age years came to know a peroxide bottle intimately). Her eyes were beady, her mouth was constantly pursed, and her skin always seemed to be goose pimpled. (I recently read that goose pimples are a throwback to the hairy days of our apehood—which explained an awful lot.)

One of my earliest childhood recollections is of me sitting on the sun parched grass of August while Cindy Lou explained to me the facts of first grade.

"Have you got your gym shoes yet?" she unpursed her lips long enough to inquire.

"W-why no," I stuttered with my customary bravery, "not yet. But-but, my mom will get me some," I answered.

She shook her head.

"She won't get me some?" I asked.

"Can't," Cindy Lou explained. "Your mother can't get you some."

"But-but she said . . . she said she would," I stammered.

"Well, she can't. And you'll get in trouble for not having them, too."

Trouble, I thought, I hadn't even started first grade and already I was in trouble. "Why-why not?" I asked, as my bottom lip quivered slightly.

"Because only my mom can buy them," she answered smugly.

"But my mom can buy them too," I argued, "Shopper's World lets anybody buy gym shoes."

"But those," Cindy Lou announced, "are not the right kind. The kind of gym shoes that you need for Wilson School come from some foreign country, from Australia," she remembered, "and they only sell them to my mother."

"But why do they have to come from that place you said?" I queried.

"Because," she paused, "because they're made from a special kind of rubber."

"I'm gonna go ask my mom," I told her as I stood up.

"Go ahead," she called after me, as I headed homeward, "but she won't tell you 'cause she doesn't want to worry you."

I stopped and turned around. "Cross your heart hope to die stick a needle in your eye that you're telling the truth?"

Cindy Lou crossed her heart solemnly.

"Do you think," I began, as I walked back towards her, "do you think your mom could buy some gym shoes for me . . . ?"

* * * * *

Cindy Lou Payne had three years on me—which she used to her best advantage. She claimed it was those three years that made her an authority on all the teachers at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School.

"Who you got next year?" she'd ask me at the very beginning of summer (so that I'd have more time to worry about what she was going to tell me).

"Miss Random," I'd whisper, hoping that she wouldn't hear me.

"Who?" she'd ask again.

"Miss Random," I'd announce again, a bit louder.

"Miss Random!" she'd exclaim, her beady eyes wide with horror, "Boy, am I happy I'm not you. Have you heard about her?"

I'd usually shake my head from side to side, mutely. Occasionally, however, I would venture a timid, "I . . . I heard that she was pretty nice." (It really didn't matter which answer I gave.)

"Nice!" she would shout. "Why, whoever told you that was lying. Miss Random isn't nice at all."

I'd mumble something incoherently.

"Did you ever hear about the time a cat wandered into her classroom and she opened the window and threw it out from the second story?" (According to Cindy Lou all the teachers that I ever had, had had a past history of throwing things out the window—be it cats or dogs or children. If the teacher happened to occupy a room on the first floor she'd take the culprit up to the second floor just to throw it out.)

"No," I'd admit, "I never heard about that."

"The person who told you that she was nice didn't tell you about that, heh?" Cindy Lou would ask. "See, I told you that they were lying."

The pattern of my elementary school teachers went unbroken. According to Cindy Lou I was always sentenced to the worst ogres in the school, while she always had the happy fortune of being blessed with earth-bound angel teachers.

That is, except for once. There was one time that I attained at least a partial victory over Cindy Lou Payne.

"Who you got next year?" she asked me, in the summer before I began fifth grade.

"I got," I announced, in a normal speaking voice, "the same teacher that you had in fifth grade—Mrs. Fustner."

"Mrs. Fustner!" she exclaimed, as she widened her eyes in horror, "have you ever heard about her? Why—she's really a-a," she stopped, as the name penetrated her memory, "a nice lady," she finished lamely.

Mrs. Fustner was the worst teacher that I ever had. . . .

* * * * *

The terrorist tactics that Cindy Lou Payne utilized extensively make the methods that the SLA and other subversive organizations employ seem like gentle childhood pranks.

A for instance of this occurred on a bright summer morning in the month of June when I announced to Cindy Lou that I was to begin swimming lessons the following week.

"Swimming lessons?" she repeated, with arched eyebrows, "where?"

"Edison pool."

"You've got to be kidding," she stated in dramatic tones.

"No," I answered, shaking my head negatively and wishing for all the world that I was. "No, I'm not."

"Do you know how they teach kids to swim at Edison pool?" she asked me, savoring her role as a doomsday announcer.

I shook my wide-eyed head from side to side.

"They teach you," she announced in a croaky whisper, "by pushing you off the high dive at the deep end of the pool."

My lower lip began to tremble.

"And that's only the first lesson," she added.

The rest of my body followed the example of my lower lip.

"But-but-but," I stumblingly announced, "but if they push me off the high dive, I don't know how to swim."

"I know," Cindy Lou acknowledged, with a bemused expression in her eyes, "but you learn fast. Or else," she continued, philosophically, "you don't."

"Well, what happens then," I timidly ventured.

"You drown," Cindy Lou declared, obviously trying to be gentle with me.

I shook as a Tahitian might if he braved the weather of Antarctica in the raw.

"Why last year alone," Cindy Lou went on to say, obvious to my shaky condition, "27 out of the 30 kids enrolled in the class drowned."

I am gullible only to a certain point—and no farther. "If 27 kids drowned, why didn't I ever hear about it?" I asked in my skeptical, don't try to pull the wool over my eyes, voice.

"Because," Cindy Lou easily explained, "they kept it out of the papers because they thought it might make fewer people want to take swimming lessons this summer.

My mother never understood why I decided against swimming lessons that summer.

* * * * *

My childhood on Catalpa Avenue was very ritualistic. On Friday nights we had pop and potato chips. On Sunday mornings we had doughnuts or rolls.

Cindy Lou Payne was aware of my family's eating patterns, and I was aware that she was aware of them. That was why I was unable to deny that we had rolls one gloomy Sunday morning in the month of April.

"Did you go to the bakery this morning?" She questioned me at what must have been her usual Sunday morning brunch time.

I bobbed my head up and down.

"What did you get?" she next queried.

"Ummm," I said, stalling for time, "we got, ah—what do you like best?"

"Doughnuts," Cindy Lou announced.

"Well, we got rolls," I announced triumphantly.

"Wait a minute, doughnuts are the things with the holes in them, right?"

I nodded my head in affirmation.

"Well, it's the other things—rolls—that I like best. Get me one," she instructed.

I obediently padded into the house and over to the bread drawer. I selected what I deemed to be a suitable roll. I presented it to Cindy Lou Payne.

"I don't like this kind," she announced with a wrinkled nose, as she threw the roll into the lily of the valley plants that grew at the side of my house. "Get me another one."

I repeated my previous expedition, and was again rewarded with a wrinkled nose and my presented roll being fed to the lilies of the valley. "Get me another one," Cindy Lou demanded.

The roll of my third trip met the same fate as the other two.

I was just getting ready to commence on my fourth trip into the kitchen when I became aware of someone's eyes upon me. I looked heavenward to see if some divine power had decided to intervene on my behalf to ask for retribution from this confirmed roll-hater. No such luck. As my eyes traveled back to earth, however, they discovered my father's face framed by the kitchen window. The expression on it led me to believe that he had occupied that position for some time.

I decided then and there, Cindy Lou or no Cindy Lou, that I wouldn't make a fourth trip to the bread drawer. I did, however, make a fourth trip into the house, which was by request.

And my father never did believe that lilies of the valley grow much better after eating rolls from the bakery.

* * * * *

"I hate Cindy Bales," I scrawled in large, kid-type letters on one of the white pillars of our front porch.

"And don't forget to put down that you're not going to pay her the 10¢ that you owe her," Cindy Lou helpfully reminded me.

"And I'm not going to pay her the 10¢ that I owe her, either," I continued in my red crayon.

I stepped back to survey my artwork. Cindy Lou nodded approvingly.

"Is that all you want me to write?" I asked her, my crayon poised for further action.

"Yeah," Cindy Lou decided, after giving the matter some thought. "Unless you can think of something else to put down."

Something else to put down? Why, I didn't even hate Cindy Bales in the first place, although I did owe her a dime. I had borrowed it from her to buy Cindy Lou some ice cream.

"No, I can't think of anything," I announced, after having made my discovery.

"Me neither," she said. "Let's go swing on your swings."

We went and swung on my swings.

My mother is not a great patron of the arts. Especially when the art is on her front porch pillar. I learned this, unfortunately, too late in life. I learned this when my mother stopped the arc my swing was making into the brilliant blue sky.

"Did you write on the pillar?" she demanded, in a voice that was not gentle.

I looked at Cindy Lou, who had quit pumping her swing, and let my head fall in guilt.

"I told her not to do it," Cindy Lou announced, interrupting my mother's wrath. "I told her, your mother's not going to like it if you write on her pillar in red crayon—so please don't do it." My mother's anger returned.

"Gosh," I thought, shaking my head in disbelief as my mother propelled me into the house. Who else had a friend like Cindy Lou Payne—who else had a friend who would try to distract a mother's wrath from her daughter? I thought myself incredibly lucky.

* * * * *

Donita Erickson

Prejudice in the Family

I know Prejudice
Quite well
He looks
Just like my father

Donita Erickson

Kup-lets for an Anti-heroic Age

or

The Conquest of Reason on the Western World Stage

On the talk show Ezra Pound
Said very little, just gaped around
As Cardinal Spellman and Ho Chi Minh
Argued about the fix we're in;
And Dryden declaiming about Granada
Was interrupted by Enchilada,
"Six to a package, ever fresh;
Next we will talk about Gilgamesh."

Sammy Davis and Booker T.
Were trading grins with Robert E. Lee,
While Gerald Ford was telling Nat Turner
He kept human rights on the far back burner:
Betty his wife was discussing with Hugh
Hefner some plans for a new interview.

"Next week we will feature the C.I.A.,
With various exes severed from pay.
They'll talk about mixed-up girls and guns,
And tricks that are played with government funds."

No rhyme nor reason can fully explain
The mad suspicions that bother the brain
Of a people still whirling around and around
Eating cotton candy with Ezra Pound.

John M. Sheehan

The Sutro Baths

Carcinoma in situ,
These aging men lie dormant
Speaking of their pasts
At the Sutro Baths.

The body politic, seeking
To rid itself of the malignancy
Of those who breed disease
And multiply insidiously,
Isolates the aging,
Comtemptible and obsolete
In the Sutro Baths.

One day,
It will find the cure,
Will eradicate the cancer
And give over to urban progress
The organ which hosts
The forgotten and the aging
At the Sutro Baths.

Sandra Fredriksen

MAPPAMOUND
For Gitta

The open atlas of your body
Limbs like peninsulas
The rounded range the spike of peak
The shaded hills damp marshes
Contours and rivulets
A birthmark like a lake
Soft down like furze upon a heath
River of vein and artery

I'm travelling over hill and plain
Until
Under your hair's great waterfall
Our two intelligences meet
In light exchanges of our eyes
Where all our humours long submerged
Arise
Like clear but salty waters from the earth
With such transparency that we can close
Our crumpled maps for good
Our route together obvious and clear

Great circles we describe harmoniously
Through land sea air and dreams

Love will create and Love reveal
Whatever certainties we feel

Companion souls that have become
The lovers that we are

Peter Russell

(the sun made its majestic
entrance to a deaf audience
sand and trees)

two people on the shore
gathering memories
light years apart
caught each other's eye
and followed it back
to the source

(the sun reflected off
bits of glass and
someplace else's past)

he picked his way over rocks
and through weeds
he had to be closer

(the sun burned leaves
and foolish crabs)

i've been waiting for you
sit down share my blanket
share my love

(the sun quietly hid in between
blades of grass and when no one
was looking went where he
was needed)

do you love me? no she said
he left
they both smiled

Mark Pavlovich

A BOXER'S LAMENT

Cover me!
a towel,
my robe,
your gloves.

Hear the gong?

Defeat is bitter
The pain too deep.

Just cover me!
My rage,
My shame.

(After seeing a painting of a defeated boxer.)

Evangeline Morse

Split Second

The lightning

struck

Grandma

the seesaw's

In the hospital
with sun-warding bars
They said she was crazy

metal handlebar

a flower
no roots, petals
no tears
only a stem
cornered
nodding to shadows.

then arched to

the willow

stripped its bark

scattered it

. . . then gone.

Barbara Hegg

Kiyo Mori

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO CHICKEN LITTLE?

Did you ever wonder what happened to Chicken Little after the King told him that the sky was not falling? After much investigation, searching through all the old records, I have discovered the following sequel.*

When Chicken Little returned home, he felt safe and secure. He was happy to know that it was not the falling sky which had hit him on the head, but an acorn. He no longer had to worry. But his neighbors!

Everytime that Chicken Little stepped out his door, a great roar of laughter and insults would greet him.

Ducky Lucky would say, "Look out! The sky is falling!" apparently forgetting that he had believed that the sky was falling quite as much as Chicken Little.

"Chicken in the sky with acorns," would sing the fox.

Chicken Little could hardly do his grocery shopping. Everybody avoided him. Mothers would gather their children and whisper just loudly enough for Chicken Little to hear, "Stay away from him. His gizzard is all fouled up."

Chicken Little would turn red with embarrassment and run to his house to hide. He began to go out less often and, therefore, began to grow thin from not eating. He began to fret about his image in the neighborhood. He felt he should move.

He tried to move, but his fame had spread. Everywhere he went, children would point and teenagers would call out, "Falling again, Chicken Little?" The adults would laugh uproariously at his discomfort. The kindest inhabitants of the realm would simply turn their heads when they saw him and try to stifle their snickers. He moved back to his old home.

Chicken Little cried a lot and the hot tears scalded his feathers. He grew more and more lonely and did not know where to turn. In desperation, he decided once more to go to see the King.

As soon as he opened his door the teasing began.

"Where you goin'?" asked Ducky Lucky.

"To see the King."

"Why? The sky falling again?" shouted the fox who was standing nearby. And he sang, "Chicken in the sky with acorns."

"Gizzard fouled again," said one rabbit to another.

"He's a real bird brain," moaned the bears.

But Chicken Little blinked back his tears and marched on his way to see the King.

At the palace, the King's guards made fun of Chicken Little.

"Well, if it ain't ol' 'The Sky is Falling' himself," guffawed one.

"The sky's not falling this time," said another, "the earth is rising." They laughed immoderately at their own jokes.

The King heard them and glared at the guards who quickly quieted and let Chicken Little pass. The King looked at the skinny, scraggly bird and smiled. Chicken Little began to tell his woes.

He told about Ducky Lucky and the fox and the children and the teenagers and the mothers and the fathers. He wasn't halfway through when tears flowed and he felt awful crying in front of the King. But the King didn't seem to notice. His eyes were closed. Chicken Little caught his breath and sobbed louder; he was sure the King was asleep.

The King jerked his head and told Chicken Little to continue. Chicken Little started again, and the King closed his eyes and leaned back once more.

Chicken Little thought that the King was so bored by his story that he had fallen asleep again. Chicken Little began to feel worse than ever. But he finished the story, then bowed his head in shame and confusion. His tears came in torrents.

Finally, the King opened his eyes and stood up. He walked around looking Chicken Little up and down. The King looked at Chicken Little's scalded feathers, his spindly legs, his scrawny body while Chicken Little tried to stop crying but couldn't. Then the King spoke.

"You really are a dumb cluck," he said, then turned and walked out.

*Although some scholars contend that the protagonist's name should be Henny Penny, I have chosen to use Chicken Little to avoid problems with advocates of Women's Liberation, and, because no woman would be silly enough to do what this character does in this sequel.

Paul Wray

CREED

I am all the things in the world
And I am nothing
I am but a speck of dust in the eye of life
I am hard and soft
As wants and needs dictate
I bend but I don't break
I am the dime store tin soldier
Who went to war and came home
Sick of the killing, maiming, and devastation
That man does to his fellow man
In the name of God and country
I stand on my own two feet
And speak my own thoughts
I create to be creative
I sing that I might have song
I look down at no man
For all men are brothers
And should be treated as such
I hold a concept of God
That all churches preach
But no one practices
I am oft times the clown
That makes you laugh
And try never to be the pain
That makes you cry

Don Taylor

Five Places of the Mystic

cricket sound
at night—little
lightnings in the sky

spanish moss
draping
the like oak
with purples
of twilight

the girl's hair
combed to her waist
like gold-blue
of asters
on clear flown wind

the hummingbird's wing
whirred
to the stillness
of glass

the moon walking
high
through silver
trees
of the winter

Charles B. Tinkham

THOUGHTS ON LIFE WHILE IN PRISON

Did you ever take time out to wonder about this thing called life?
Is there a purpose or plan, for all this grief and strife?
An atheist is quick to declare, "There is no God," accept this I cannot,
Does he think this is accident? All these troubles that I've got.
Would he have me believe that it's luck, that keeps me in the dilemma I'm in?
No, I can't believe its chance or accident, that puts me where I am or have been.
Cause hard times come around too regularly, everythings going fine and then—
Like clock work, misery comes knocking and here comes a crisis again.
A preacher will chant and shout, and a priest will rattle his beads,
and tell me of sins I've committed, the careless way I've sown my seeds.
Can I believe that, Can you, that this is punishment for some sin?
If that's the cause or case, why heaven or hell? Both places I've already been.
Oh yes, I've been in heaven, feeling good and clean on a summer night—
Hearing good music, smelling a rose, knowing everything is all right.
Was that a reward—for some forgotten good deed that I've done?
And the hell I suffer, do I deserve it, for long ago having a little fun?
No, that wouldn't be a good God, to punish me and not tell me why.
Or to reward me when I just got done telling a lie or stealing.
I know I'm not the only one, we all have our crosses to bear.
From a shoe lace breaking when we're rushed, to dying in the electric chair.
The rich, the poor, the young and the old—all have our good and bad years.
Life seems to be a wheel—constantly turning out smiles and tears.
If everything is going smooth—the sun's shining and not a cloud in the sky—
Then you better get ready for the storm—it will be here by and by.
Now I'm not too smart, but on this subject I know as much as anyone
The subject is the hereafter—here's thoughts from the thinking I've done—
Every minute of my life I'm learning about myself and the world that I know.
Constantly gaining new horizons, acquiring knowledge of life as I go.
God wouldn't destroy this by leaving me dead when I die.
It would be too much of a waste—I mean everyone—not only I.
Maybe life is like a school—preparation for whatever is after death.
A lesson to be learned from everything, from the first to the very last breath.
I wouldn't start to define or reason, just what the lessons suggest.
I know experience is the best teacher and God would only want the best.
The hardships could be an obstacle course—put there as a plan,
To toughen my soul and build character, falling and stumbling as I ran.
The tranquil times? No more than a rest period, spaced far apart and brief,
so the soul wouldn't sour and be bitter from an overdose of grief.
Why do some suffer more than others? This is really just a guess.
Maybe one life on earth is just a grade in school and sorrow more or less,
Is rationed out accordingly—not as as to whether you've failed or passed.
But to how strong your soul has become, in this life or the next or even the last.
How many lives till your graduate? and after graduation—What?
I don't pretend to know all the answers, and these answers I haven't got.
I do know there are more stars in the universe, than grains of sand on earth.
And God would find a job for me—if I finished school and proved my worth.
He might let me create a sunset, on a far and distant world;
Or be in charge of the rainfall, when April clouds are unfurled.
Now doesn't that make more sense than being laid to an eternal rest?
Or burning in hell fire and damnation when to the devil being guest?
Or even in heaven strumming a harp, bored stiff, just lounging around—
Or everything ending in death—just a body rotting in the ground.
I know some people will laugh and with this poem and idea disagree—
But while laying here in prison; they're a source of comfort to me.

Lonnie D. Williams

The water had been perfect.
Everything went smoothly.
A bright blue busyness
filled the air that day,
but I saw only the darkness
of night.
As my feet felt for the textured
brown tiling,
I moved with caution
so as not to stumble.
My journey was not far
yet the darkness prevailed.
A strange atmosphere
had come over the pool
one that I'd never felt before.
The only sign of life
was the distant light
from the locker room door.
I stopped for a moment to head back,
but turned forward.
Within moments
I reached the small wooden desk,
without as much as one trip or fall.
Feeling about
I found the forgotten papers
and slowly headed back.
The door light seemed bright
from its distance,
and made me feel frightened,
so I hurried the pace a bit.
Next, I found myself
down on my knees in pain.
Something had been pushed
in my pathway,
and fear burst through my body.
Immediately, I ran for the light.
To my amazement
the door slammed shut
as if a great wind had thrust it.
Total darkness overcame me
as my heart pounded out cries of help.
I melted to my knees screaming,
and then noticed the glow.
The walls were shining, forming light.
My spirits rose,
but as the light grew,
strange sounds came,
chanting voices from afar.
Then I noticed a figure,
calling me from across the pool.
I ducked my head,
then looked again,
out of sheer panic.
He was coming toward me
over the water,
a tall white-haired old man.
I felt paralyzed with fright.
As if wanting
to wake from a bad dream,
but unable.

"No, dear God, no," I screamed,
I can't recall how many times,
but he kept coming.
His long white cloak
skimmed over the water
unbelievably calm.
The chanting grew louder,
as he reached my quivering body
and put his hand upon my head.
Pushing his eyes into mine
as if to look inside, he smiled.
His haunting black eyes
pierced my mind
and transfixed me
as I noticed a large scar
upon his forehead.
It was of satanic shape.
A deep echoing laugh came over him,
"No God can help you now,
be thankful you're not what I seek."
All I remember then,
is darkness,
and now the hospital.
I tell you it was no dream!
Someone must believe me.

Doug Norris

IMAGES IN THE STYLE OF WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

A yellow daffodil
Ruffles
Her cupped lips
And waits
For grass
To warm green.

A red squirrel
Balances
In fury
Arabesques
On thin
Black cord
Of wire.
Goodbye.

A squiggly curl
Of sweet butter
Rests neatly
Beside
Your coffee cup,
Lies
On edge of
Dulled knife
Edgily.

Linda Knight Preston

Robbie

We grasp at something we are so sure of—
Only to pull back at the thought
of the God we are almost to touch—
Afraid of the consequences.
(self is a hard thing to surrender)

Still,
we search so endlessly,
so crazy,
all around, below and above the reality.

It is so simple it is complicated.

We are on the verge of the inevitable.

Amidst—
not because of.

It is—
not will be. . .

And our blood will run as one in an unending electrical milli-second
of exploding energy.

We will be—

D. Henderlong Egnatz

the sea

flowing waters
so evenly spread
traveling nowhere but to the shore
an horizon
of sea to sun
just one line to the sky

a blue infinity
or edge
fooling my eager mind
filling me
with far off dreamlands
rainbows to reach

a friend
of such magnitude
to let all worries avail
and not one word
to be retold
just the beat of crashing waves

Doug Norris



Greg Markey

Break Out, Break In

Far away he heard the siren screaming down and around Buckhorn Curve. Coming straight now on Highway 3 through the valley, its alarm was wailing out danger, urgency, and fear.

He knew for certain where it was headed. He'd been there minutes before and had left hurrily, a bulging discount store suitcase banging against his knee.

Now he squatted in the cornfield, crouched and ready for flight like a fearful miserable sparrow. His head swiveled much like an owl's and panic spun through his thoughts.

"Oh God, are they goin' to catch me so soon?"

His eyes were wide and round, pupils dilated, trying to pierce the black moonless night.

"Sweet Jesus, I've done it again—done it again."

His heart pounding and chest heaving, he nervously put his head down on his knee. Why? Why? He was confused and frightened, even though a short time ago he was confident and relaxed.

He had merely walked away from the trustee farm in Luray. There was no one to stop him; no fence, no gate, no wall to turn him back. Freedom was his for the taking.

Jail was not where he wanted to be! He had served time and was sorry for his crimes. Make a moral restitution too, the judge had told him. "Yes, thank you, he would." Now it was Thanksgiving and he wanted to be home.

The shrieking siren pulled him out of reverie. On and on, closer and closer it whined to the farm he'd just left.

Wheels of the squad car spun and crunched on the gravel driveway. Doors slammed. Then it was so quiet, so still that the dry crackling of the corn stalks rustling in the soft night wind made him jump and stare about again.

His skill with the crowbar was immediately evident to Deputy County Sheriff Teal when he arrived at the Bluefield farm. Hunks of jagged window glass hung in the aluminum storm door and bits and pieces of glass lay scattered about the side porch of the white frame farm house.

Sheriff Deputy Teal's leather hightops cautiously stepped through the gaping entrance. Teal was a man with a slight figure, a beak nose and long thin hands. The gun on his hip protruded noticeably out of place, but his brown felt hat bent with authority over the damage he found.

Drawers were pulled out and emptied in a circus of disarray. Lamps and chairs lay upended and bed covers sat in grotesque heaps. A gutted cash box sprawled open on the floor.

Mrs. Bluefield sat mute at the kitchen table. Her husband rumbled in the bedroom.

"Oh God, he's took it. Got the \$200," he moaned. "Gone, gone."

The sheriff's deputy walked into the bedroom, but quietly backed out as he noticed the old man crying softly.

Maggie, the Bluefields' daughter, visiting from Chicago and wise in the way of such happenings, immediately urged Teal to begin his search.

"There's an attic upstairs! Maybe he's up there or out in the barn or back up in the fields. He's not been gone for long that's for sure. Look, the coke he helped himself to is over there—only half gone and there's still frost on the bottle."

Teal eyed her long and hard, patted his holstered gun and asked them all to sit down at the kitchen table.

Instead Maggie stepped over to the enclosed back porch, turning back immediately, her face contorted in horror.

"Bingo . . . he's killed Bingo," she screamed.

Instantly the others assembled at the porch door and in unison moaned "Oh no!" as they witnessed the large black bloody dog stretched out on the floor with its head smashed. A crowbar was flung alongside it.

"Looks like old Bingo didn't have much of a chance," Mr. Bluefield murmured.

The sight of blood quickened Teal's pulse, but he refused to be ruffled and instead led his little party back to the kitchen table.

"Give me a list of what's missing," he ordered, his manner brash.

Mrs. Bluefield shook her head and worried aloud, "I'll have to wash every towel, every dish, every blanket. To think he's had his filthy, dirty hands on everything. Hard to tell where he's had them, and where he's been."

"Please mam, tell me what's missing?"

"Eugene, we'll never leave for Florida now. I'll never get this wash done in time. Filthy, dirty hands of his. . . all over everything."

"How about you Mr. Bluefield, do you know what's missing?"

"Well, \$200 cash for sure, and we can't find some garnet rings and a brooch or our Indian head penny collection and some \$10 gold pieces. . . . or my German Luger pistol and ammunition I had for that."

A German Luger pistol. The sheriff's deputy heard it in the bottom of his stomach. A sudden stillness invaded the room. Maggie glanced fearfully at Teal and left. Teal pursed his lips and rocked back on his heels. They all surely knew that he knew the complexion of things had changed.

Maggie suddenly burst in from the side yard.

"Hey, there's a car just pulled off the road down by the grove. Lights are out and someone got out of the car. Think maybe they're looking for someone? Maybe you ought to go down and see."

For a slight second Teal felt the fear showing in his eyes and on his face. Then he was in control, setting his mouth in a firm hard line to prove it. He said nothing, but got up too quickly and upset his chair against the floor.

He eased the squad car down the driveway and hesitated before he sped the short distance to the grove. Maggie watched from behind the honeysuckle trellis on the front porch.

In a few seconds a flashing red light was sending pulsating signals from among the trees, but too soon Deputy Teal got back in his car and headed to the Bluefields. The other car spun out and away very fast.

Maggie was waiting for him.

"Some guy going to the bathroom," Teal chortled. "Guess that will cure him of any more fancy road side stops."

Teal walked back in the kitchen and faced the Bluefields. He hoped they heard his comments to Maggie. He was too embarrassed to repeat the story to the elder couple.

The Bluefields remained seated, their mouths turned down and their hands helplessly folded on the table.

Teal slapped his clip board against his thigh. "Well, there's not much more we can do tonight, so I'll mosey on back to the station for awhile and file my report." He cleared his throat.

Aren't you even going to search the barn," Maggie asked incredulously. "I know he's out there. I got this creepy feeling'. I know he's around. . . .close by. . . .and maybe watchin' us this very minute. Maybe he's up in the attic."

"Naw Sis, these guys don't hang around very long. He's lit out. . . . gone from here now," Teal said. "But if you see or hear anything unusual like, call us right away, and we'll send someone out quick."

He was in his car and gone before Maggie could plead with him further.

They cleaned what they could, and not knowing what else to do, the Bluefields and their daughter Maggie remained at the kitchen table. They all felt awkward, sitting there in the bright room. They hoped no late passerby would see them in their distress. They felt self-conscious and slightly to blame for the whole episode.

The kitchen door was shut as best it could be and they all anxiously glanced at it from time to time.

Toward dawn they took some comfort in the happy chirping of the birds. They went to bed, the first dim rays of light giving them security. Finally they slept.

By mid-morning they were up and ready, having no need to dress as they had slept in their clothes. Over breakfast, memory of the previous night's events returned, and they were all afraid again.

Maggie left her mother clearing the breakfast dishes and journeyed outside to see if the night's uninvited visitor had left a trace. She walked through the backyard past the garage and the chicken coop and into the barnyard. She found nothing out of order except her courage.

She wanted to go to the barn, but didn't. Instead she moved back behind the garage and sadly watched her father bury Bingo. Afterwards she went back to the house and helped her mother.

"I tell you mom, he'll be back. If not tonight, then tomorrow. But he'll be back," Maggie said.

"Now Maggie."

"He'll be back. He's got the taste of Bingo's blood and our money. He'll be back for more. Just our luck he'll be a mass murderer or something."

"Maggie stop it."

"You saw what he did to Bingo. That could have been us you know."

"Maggie get ahold of yourself. He's gone from these parts and won't come back. You heard the sheriff," her mother cautioned.

"Cept maybe he knows we called the sheriff and wants to get even. You've heard about people in New York getting killed and others watching and hearing and not doing a thing about it. . . .not

wanting to get involved. There's a reason. When the killer finds out who squealed, he comes back for them too.

"And suppose he comes back and demands more money. He'll hurt us if we don't give in. Suppose that happens. He's been here once before. He knows what the place looks like, inside and out. He might wait for us on the back porch," Maggie continued.

"Maggie, if he remembers what this place looks like, he'll know we ain't got nothing' more to give. Now stop frettin' and don't go worrying Pop. Him losin' the \$200 and pistol is bad enough."

Outwardly life at the farm appeared normal, except no one was going up to the barn. The bluefields were staying close to the house.

The farm as their farm had ceased production some time ago. As the years befall the Bluefields, they gradually sold their livestock and eventually leased their acreage to other farmers. Now they simply tended to a vegetable garden and kept a few chickens.

In the morning they went about their chores, gathering in the last of the pumpkins, feeding the hens, raking a few stray leaves and hanging out the wash in the cool brisk November winds. From time to time they peered searching out over their fields or warily glanced over their shoulders.

Maggie looked toward the deserted barn. She imagined the burglar up there and felt a prickly chill run up her arms and down the back of her neck.

If Bingo were alive, Maggie told herself, she would have the courage to go to the barn. She liked the barn. It was always a secure place, sheltering the animals at night and guarding the farm machinery.

If the afternoon Maggie sat on the side porch swing, gently swaying back and forth and staring at the barn's cavernous grey hulk. In her mind she saw the burglar crouching in a far corner of the hayloft, a bright narrow shaft of sunlight falling through the dust across his form.

She felt his presence and once she thought she'd seen the barn door crack open ever so slowly. He was watching her surely. Rapidly she went back into the house.

After the elder Bluefields had gone to bed at night, Maggie stayed at her bedroom window and watched the barn. It sat silent in the bright harvest moonlight, remote but inviting. There were so many special nooks in the barn that made her games of hide 'n seek as a little girl even more fun. She thought about running up and down the ladders to the hayloft and swinging from the long rope that hung from the rafters and landing into a deep pile of straw.

Suddenly she jolted upright! A slim figure slipped from the barn door, crouched and ran to the chicken coop. The prickles returned all over her body, and she stared in wide-eyed disbelief. Still doubting her eyes, she saw him again, edging back into the barn. It was true. He was there.

The next day Maggie lived with her secret and said nothing to her parents. Time passed slowly. He hadn't come to the house and perhaps meant them no harm. Or maybe he was gone.

The afternoon sun was bright as she gathered up a blanket, two lunch meat sandwiches, a thermos of hot coffee and a butcher knife.

She arrived at the barn and silently slid back the door. She listened and then slowly check the stalls and the grain room. Nothing. She started up a ladder to the hayloft, trying to convince her pounding pulse this was nothing more than the old familiar game of hide 'n seek.

She found him in the loft. He was sleeping. He wore green work trousers, a dirty white t-shirt, and an old Army jacket with all the buttons missing. His reddish brown hair was a tangled Afro. He probably would have looked gangly had he been standing.

The German Luger lay loosely in his outstretched hand. If she walked over and picked it up, she would surely wake him. She stood transfixed.

Not knowing what else to do she layed the food and blanket at her feet, but held tight to the knife. Her heart racing, she turned to go back down the ladder.

Instantly she heard a quick rustle in the hay and giving a little cry and dropping the knife, she swung around to find the pistol pointed in her direction.

Time waited. They were both frozen in their poses, each fearfully eyeing the other.

After an endless duration, he motioned toward the food and blanket. She gingerly shook her head yes. . . .yes he could have them.

Another motionless intermission. Finally he spoke, hoarsely at first. He jabbed the gun at her with each word. "You're. . . you're not going to turn me in. You can't, you know. If I go back in this time they're going to throw away the keys. I'm one of the warden's favorites, you know and he ain't too keen on me bein' gone. But this time I'm out for good. Ain't goin' to take that rap no more, you understand?"

She shook her head yes.

"And you ain't goin' tell no one I'm here, are you? I won't bother you, I promise. Just let me be, and I'll be gone from here soon."

She shook her head yes and then no. The suitcase lay nearby. She wanted to ask for it in return for her promise of silence, but couldn't.

"How come you brought this stuff?", he asked, momentarily lowering the gun.

But she didn't answer. She was fleeing down the ladder and out into the cool bright sunlight.

When darkness came and he was sure there would be no moon, he eased slowly down the ladder and quickly stepped through the barn door. He shivered uncontrollably partly from the night air but mostly from his nervousness. He wasn't sure he had made the right decision even though he knew it was time to move on before the girl either by accident or on purpose told her secret.

He stood back in the shadows, waiting to see if anyone was watching. Waiting, waiting, waiting. . . .Lord he was tired of waiting. He'd been waiting so long for trials to end, sentences to start, prison terms to finish, friends he knew he didn't have to visit. But most of all he'd been waiting for freedom, and here it was, and he was still waiting.

Then he was up and walking away, turning down a dirt road.

The Chevrolet Bel-Air was easy pickings. The television was turned so loud the owners didn't hear him start the engine. Slowly he eased the car down the driveway and bang, the porch light blinked on. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, they've seen me," he yelled. Instinctively he had turned on the car's headlights which had shown in the house window as he rolled down the driveway.

He squealed out, the porch light growing faint in the billows of dust he left behind in the darkness.

Eight miles away he ran into a road block. Two squad cars sat across the road, damming his escape. He liked the idea of slamming right through them. But he was no fool. So he stopped the car and waited.

Sheriff Deputy Teal, recognizing the car, yelled over his bull horn, "Get out with your hands up where we can see 'em."

He opened the car door and stood up, his ragged coat sleeve catching on the door handle. He heard a zinging crack, looked down at the red stuff spilling out of his stomach. He felt himself slowly slipping to the pavement. When he hit, he was dead.

Sheriff Deputy Teal's partner rolled him over and flashed a light in his face. He searched his pockets. "Hey didn't them Bluefields lose some jewelry? Here's some. Reckon we maybe nabbed our man." A short time lapsed while he quickly stuffed something in his pocket and then yelled out, "Hey, Teal, this man ain't armed. . . .ain't got no gun!"

"Don't make no difference," said Teal, "who's to know. I'm the sheriff's deputy around here. 'Sides, he robbed the Bluefields didn't he?"

Later Sheriff Deputy Teal drove out to the Bluefields' farm and dutifully handed over the Indian head penny collection and the garnet jewelry.

"Can't find the \$200 or them gold pieces, but they'll turn up," Teal announced.

"What about my pistol?" asked Bluefield.

"Oh we're keepin' that for evidence," Teal replied.

The money was never returned, but Maggie had the pistol. She found it in the hayloft after he'd gone. She told no one for fear she might confess she had harbored a criminal. . . .both in her mind and in reality. . . .and that was surely against the law.

Janet Cartwright Moran

IN MEMORIAM
Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam

The whole sky is a riot
Bicycle-chains of galaxies.
Fires on the arterial star-roads
Factory on celestial factory a-smoke

Black dwarfs and white dwarfs
Red giants in squads
Pulsating beacons of the Cepheids

Titans and gods fall in the wake of history

And slow damp rain of tear-gas falls
Acrid and crass on miserable man

Peter Russell

Tiny warm handprint

Pressed on the frosted window

slowly fades and melts away,

Sunshine heats the

Now clear window,

Smiling reflection of a child's face.

Rose K. Jacobson



Mark Mybeck

Bartok

'A picture of a woman with arms akimbo calling out to a lanky boy riding tall in a saddle of mahogany like Frederick the Great's skin when he died after a lifetime without a bath that's the only thing that sunk in from the book I studied yesterday at the library while peering at that inscrutable man over by the western windows where old men sit reading Wall Street Journals he sat reading the same book he read yesterday the day before and on back through time for as long as I can remember something like The Perfect Will of God often studying a single page for as long as a half hour maddening to me who is compelled to glance up every minute or so to see if he had at last turned a page wearing the same clothes he wore yesterday the day before and so on blue tennis shoes not deck shoes which have no rubber covering the tender toes white socks tops not showing beneath the cuffless gray slacks with their perfect permanent crease beltless which is not I don't think the same as sans belt blue linen shirt without buttons at the collar covered by a navy button-up sweater three of the four always buttoned difficult-to-describe-but-common-enough hat with fake fur all around the sides and a cloth peak exposed on top he even wears it indoors maybe covering a bald spot or protecting what little hair is left as perhaps I should do being so self-conscious about a receding foreline hairline never could get that straight so it would just roll off the tongue easily without pausing to think which is correct like conversational conservational ascetic acerbic ascorbic appellation Appalachian Ingmar Bergman Ingrid Bergman Inger Stevens Anthony Boucher Anthony Burgess Burgess Meredith Liberian librarian old guy probably underemployed like me with plenty of time to spend at the library during daytime hours reading a book like that perhaps to help him face the music even when he doesn't like the tune or ponder if a job is in the Cards for him although it could be that he works nights or evenings like the librarian I find so intriguing her long slender red fingers like a pianist's from handling too many books hands which enchanted me the day I checked out what was it the first book ever must have been Miss Lonelyhearts no that was in a complete works volume the first book was a slender thing without a coverjacket dustjacket Blast another one and wasn't fiction I don't think perhaps that book on resume preparation but no that book was twenty years old good for Korean War vets looking for defense contract careers not for those of us just looking for work.'

Do you think he'd tab me? he shouted into the din but she couldn't hear him, shaking her head no anyway. His head was over onto a fist limp as a baby's and molded it into a cushion against the fake-brick wall.

'I wonder if she goes to school around here maybe the extension undoubtedly a local girl wonder how old she is I'd like to ask her out for a beer after she gets off some night maybe hold her book-scarred hand and run through the cold from the library to here but I'd need more money than I have for that while shit sometimes I think now don't get on that track again depress yourself all to pieces think of the old guy some more once I saw him take out a pen from inside his sweater and make a jot on a notepad or something so I jumped up and hurried past him as if on the way to the drinking fountain to get a chance but it wasn't a notebook at all but a pamphlet I had seen once before in a laundromat Should We Use Instrumental Music in Worshiping God? and I almost cried with tears of recognition he looked up and stared at me but without suspicion so maybe he's a good joe now where have I seen her before?'

Hey Frank Frankie I decided to keep it.

What?

I decided to keep it.

I'm sorry can't hear, and then she couldn't hear him either as a tall ash-blond person carrying two kittens and a beer jostled her and she was lost to view in the flow of a crowd which surged like a dangerous cross-current. Her hair had been familiar, the bangs cut straight across and low on her forehead the way so much hair was worn a few years ago. Behind him a lady shattered a glass against the linoleum while her red-faced companion looked on, nearly beside himself with nervous giggles.

... okay so I told 'em if anybody comes in while we're... Everybody should just sit back and relax and I'd start in with the end of a real long story I knew Uncle Embry knew. That way it'd look as though we'd been just sittin' around shootin' the shit. Well sure enough no sooner did Eldred start in but Uncle Embry's pickup pulls

up out front. Everybody sat back and tried to look bored. Uncle Embry stopped just before he came through the door, I could tell he was listenin' outside, so I started in with, There ya are, sweetheart, Jake said. Ellie just laughed and said, You figger to do it with that little thing? Well Jake just looked her in the eye and said, Sister, you don't know it yet but the train's come 'round the bend. Of course, everybody bein' so naturally jumpy and giddy and keyed-up everybody went hysterical for a couple minutes and Uncle Embry came in in the middle of all that laughin' and just smiled at me, then went upstairs to bed...

Hey. Good to see you.

Well well, Been a long time.

Back for a while?

I hope so. Ready to study this time.

Heard you got a squaw.

Nah. We're just engaged. Unofficially engaged.

She got a rock?

Well, yeah. She does.

Sounds serious

I hope so.

The real thing huh? Not just lust?

Both I guess.

She with papoose?

You nuts?

Happens all the time.

Well not with this guy. When I get married it'll be with...

Yeah two Blatz.

...and both eyes open.

Good man.

Okay he was in Easy Rider Five Easy Pieces Carnal Knowledge... Chinatown.

Yeah.

And a new one.

The Last Tycoon but he doesn't star in it I don't think.

...epileptic fit. Until they took her to a doctor they thought she was having a religious experience.

Yeah and this guy's brother bought his wife for thirty five bucks a twenty year old pickup and...

...just won't do anymore so I've been shopping around for a new one. I looked at Fiats and Corollas but I think I'll probably settle for a Datsun Zee Twelve. Hey hey, al!

'Can't even recall when it was gone though I remember everything that happened that day there was a white golf tee lying near my car at least three months out of season and I noticed the cold because I only had a light jacket on and was trying to decide if I should run back and fetch the heavier coat in my trunk there were two yellow and black I found it! stickers on the sidewalk and on the stop sign someone had stuck a huge I lost it! sticker and I couldn't help but smile three egg rolls and a glass of milk later walking down to the bookstore following two Spanish girls with dark eyes dark hair rouged cheeks high-heeled boots to the knee fashionable coats one imitation fur although I suppose it could have been the real thing they were speaking Spanish fluently and went into the bookstore too one immediately tried to exchange a badly printed paperback edition of Lawrence's Seven Pillars of Wisdom while the other looked around as there was a record sale going on that day with Waylon Jennings Willie Nelson Jessie Colter Roger McGuinn before he changed his first name Tanya Tucker Dolly Parton's Bargain Store and what's that lady's name reminded me of the receptionist in the last place I applied maybe she sings on the side must have been somewhere along about then I got tired of reading standing up so I walked on down to the library.'

Well there's all kinds of antennas...

Antennae.

All right, antennae. Radio antennae pick up radio, television antennae pick up television stations and all the programs. Well a pyramid is an antenna that picks up this kind of cosmic solar energy....

Okay. Now, they want you to take the partial derivatives of these third order equations. All right? Okay. Now, this first equation. All right we want to differentiate with respect to K, okay? K is raised to the third power in this term, okay? Okay now this equation represents, well what does he want? can't he see I'm busy? all right, right, you're right, represents acceleration, right, of a moving object, in this case a car. Okay now you realize a hundred and forty miles per second per second is a little much, okay? but we'll pretend it's a rocket sled okay? Okay now the partial of K cubed with respect to K, okay, is what? Okay. All right, now is this term okay?....

One wall of the men's room had been re-decorated since the janitor's last fastidious expurgation of the many bits of doggerel inspiration. After urinating he stood there leaning against the sink and read until an old man shuffled in. It was almost as though someone had transcribed a scene from some improperly dubbed foreign film.

To be lonely, one
Must first have loved and lost
For without loved and a feeling for others
Loneliness exists not.

So if you're blind from birth
You're not blind at all?

Basketball is to Indiana what opera is to Italy.

I rest my case.

Take away the water and what does Panama have left?

A big ditch.

Why just last week I saw a 13 year old girl
with breasts like cantelopes. And you say
I'm insane?

Only if you sliced and ate them.

He had always found the witty-serious use of erudition intriguing, among other things.

Returning to his table he passed that end of the bar where a portable television set hung suspended from the ceiling. On the screen was a close-up face-shot of a girl singing into a hand-held microphone. Her chin disfigured just a bit each time she opened her mouth and there was a puckered welt on her neck just below and in front of the left ear, like the mark made by a mild beesting or a kitten's claws. No one was watching as the bartender hurried over and stretched a hand up toward the set. As the channel changed an ad for peanut butter replaced the singer and the sound came up suddenly, much too loud.

YOU SHOULDN'T STICK TO THE SAME BRAND JUST BECAUSE YOU LIKE IT

The bartender rotated the dial a bit more and the choosy housewife disappeared. Then he found the volume control.

SENSUAL BUT NOT Too far from innocent. . .

I don't like doubleknits. It's like a thousand hands clinging and pulling.

Oh I sympathize with you.

Are you married or. . .

. . . I never saw her in was Five Easy Pieces. She was outstanding, simply outstanding. This was long before All in the Family.

They repeated the one the other day where they finally have their baby. A boy. They named him Joey.

I don't watch it.

Oh neither do I.

. . . Maimie Van Doren. This was years ago. She came out with a skirt that was so short Carson took off his coat in order to cover her knees.

. . . as well as Magic Christian Candy Barbarella The Loved One. . . I thought Isherwood did The Loved One.
They collaborated.
What about Doctor Strangelove?
Did Roger Vadim do Barbarella with . . .

'These people all have something to say maybe it's the drink in them you know it's the beer talkin' and all that but they have some-

body to talk to don't forget that maybe that's your problem you just don't have anyone to talk to who was the girl that yelled at me a while ago wonder if she left how in the hell am I going to meet that librarian I hate trying to introduce myself to someone I don't know maybe I'll run into her someday on the street or parking her car yeah I could give her change for the meter no working there every day I imagine they come prepared for that sort of thing or have a special place to park that'd be weird just sit outside waiting for her to pull up oh that's ridiculous what sort of things could I say to someone I don't know but would like to get acquainted with Handled any good books lately? she should recognize my face me being in there so often hope she doesn't think I'm a highbrow I could carry a calculator and pretend to be a student how could I find out if she's in school maybe I could check out one of those So You're Going to College? books she'd have to respond to that if she were in school maybe I should go back to school but then that takes money and the only thing I've got to my name is a seven year old car that looks as if it's stolen from an old school marm that day I shocked all those people with it I think it was near the library then too boy I'm really hanging out there a lot I climbed out of my car sort of awkwardly because I parked a bit close to that red Ferrari and that kid riding the bike I think it was a twenty incher it had an enormous banana seat and sissy bar he jerked his head around to get a better look at the car and upset as he crashed into the curb but no I don't think the car distracted him come to think of it wasn't that the day you couldn't seem to stop humming that horn solo from the NPR broadcast yeah the kid had probably never heard a falsetto hum before that was some French horn though maybe I should go to a community concert one of these nights instead of coming in here and spending what little change I have is that her again over there I wonder if Jake would start a tab for me he knows me doesn't he then I could have one more before I go and would sleep easier tonight yeah I'll get a beer on tab and see if I can find out where she knows me.'

. . . sexist, the language is sexist, the textbooks are sexist, even intercourse is sexist. . . .designed perfectly to get a man off while. . . . Well you just don't hear much about them, that's all. There's The Day the Fish Came Out. The Hunting Party. Uh, oh yes, Soldier Blue, awful film. The Adventurers Carnal Knowledge The Wind and the Lion The Domino Principle.

Yeah, with Gene Hackman.
She's doing a Wertmuller picture now.
A Wertmuller, you're sure?
A Night Full of Rain, I believe.

. . . sittin' around the other night thinkin' about how it might not be a bad idea to yank yer money out of the bank and keep it in a sock what with all the taxes you have to pay on the interest. . .

He stood at the bar, waiting, watching the bartender, a short mid-dleaged man with tight gray curls and a dark mustache, wag his finger in the face of a tall girl standing at the waitress' station. The television was off now, but up here at the front of the place the noise seemed much louder, as if a portion of the light reflecting from the long mirror behind the bar was being transformed into sound as it rebounded back into the crowd. The bartender did not even glance up as the young man drank from a half-empty beer bottle which had been standing on the bar before him. In fact, it was not until several minutes later that the bartender looked up—perhaps distracted by a draft created with the young man's exit—drank from the same bottle himself, wiped the ring from the imitation-marble countertop, and returned to his animated monologue.

. . . well, nine out of ten people when they first meet me dismiss me as a rather conventional if occasionally odd malcontent. Which is quite accurate. I mean, those nine people are pretty good judges of character. But I'm not interested in people who are honest with themselves. I'm interested in those few people who see me as a saint or a father confessor or mother superior, you know what I mean, and as a result are honest with me instead of themselves. They tell me the most fascinating things. I sit up nights thinking about the things which worry them. . .

Philip Hess

Within the realms of human thought—
Man searches for the true meaning of life.

For just to live is not enough—
The essence of existence confronts all.

Many will search all of their lives—
Only few will transcend through normal bounds.

It's how we live in the present—
That decides the outcome of the future.

If life is dim and meaningless—
Then our paths will be dark and uncertain.

When days are lived to their fullest—
Each moment of life will bring new meaning.

Uncertain of life after death—
Man's mark must be more than crosses for graves.

Time is man's only enemy—
Let us not waste it, every second counts.

God may have put us on this earth—
Man will determine the length of his stay.

Steve Ramsey



Seven and a half million unemployed

No kiss of greeting tonight
over the chuck roast stewing
the pot of rice steaming
just
"well, got two week notice. . . .
'budget cut' they said."
". . .but college
. . .the mortgage."

Young folks jostling
in muffled voices
"Dad's worried."
"No friends in today,
please. . . .tired."

In narcotic night
manhood now limp
hollow cheerfulness
fading
with the morning moon.

D. C. Parker

Kiyo Mori



First Place Graphics

Ruth Deal

Landing at McGuire
on a dark morning
my senses filled
with exhaust
noise
dirt
drunks in the gutter
I asked myself
is this
the land of opportunities?

Marita K. Wishart

Teenage Old Lady

When I get older and turn grey
Will things still be the same?
I hope so.
I want to still have fun.
I want to play with my grandchildren and
I want to eat ice cream and get it all over me
Then wait to take a bath
Until the next day.
I'd like to have squirt gun fights
with the neighborhood children;
Maybe throw a water balloon or two.
Have a race with the boy down the street
And play a game of football with the others.
I want to ride a motorcycle;
Tell dirty jokes
(well, maybe just one or two).
I'm gonna wear blue jeans and t-shirts
Plus dirty, holey, and smelly sneakers.
I think I'll still listen to Rock n Roll
And do the latest dances.
For one week every month I'll live like a slob
(to remind me of my days as a teenager)
And I won't pick up anything.
Yes, I think I'll be a
Teenage old lady!

Renee Schwoegler

VENICE

The mountains seem so far away
When you live on this island.
Here pigeons tip-toe to the water's edge
But the eagle patrols the highlands.

I enter the darkened churches
Where the darkness hides the truth,
Where aged peasants cross themselves
And the floor's worn smooth,

And I think of the bare granite crags,
Blizzard and avalanche;
Of the mainland cities, and traffic,
And the springing brach.

Flagstones, palazzos, canals,
Pedestrians, silent boats,—
An entirely human city
Noisy with human notes.

The rain and the tides affect us,
The fishermen know the sea.
I wander from church to cake-shop
In a strange security.

Pretty Venetian children
With fur collars on their coats—
Different indeed from the medieval
Cities with moats.

Crude Nature overlaid
By an unaided industry;
Handwork and noise of voices
Not the machines' decree.

Over the water, on the Veneto
The Palladian Villas, and gardens—
Everyone else is making bombs,
Their spirit hardens.

Lapped by the neutral waters,
Lazy perhaps, but free,
Suddenly you are aware
Here of humanity.

Why should I care
What the idiot Powers do
If they but leave this city
Out of their zoo?

Why should I go anywhere
When I can walk your streets,
Venice, you Most Serene
Of seductive lovely cheats?

Why suffer the pain of the world's

Why should I go anywhere
When I can walk your streets,
Venice, you Most Serene
Of seductive lovely cheats?

Why suffer the pain of the world's
If I enjoy your deceipts?

Peter Russell

Have you
ever looked
at a
star-filled sky
and wished upon
one of
many stars,
only to
later find
you actually
wished
on
Mars?

Catherine Potosky

Some people tell me
that I am loosing my mind
.... Untrue....
I know where my mind is at.
It's not lost.
I can feel it.

DIANE BLACK

Just Ordinary People

Mrs. Metzger lies awake waiting for the alarm to go off the same way she does every morning. She watches the sunlight filtering through the trees, through her collection of perfume bottles, and onto the walls and ceiling. This natural display comforts her, so does the clamour coming from the robin's nest lodged in the oak tree just outside her window. She carefully plans her day although she knows nothing special will happen to demand such detailed thought. The alarm buzzes. It scares her the same way it does every morning. Now she is officially awake. She gets dressed, and starts to make breakfast for herself and her son, David. This is an ordinary day. Mrs. Metzger and David are ordinary people.

"David, wake up! The sun and your eggs are both sunny-side up! C'mon now, you know what your father always said about sleeping late."

"Yes mother, he said, 'If you sleep late, you will not only miss the worm and the bus, but you will miss an opportunity to better your life.'"

"That's good advice."

"He also said, 'If you are ever in doubt over the existence of god, jump out of a window, and experience one of his gifts—gravity.' That's good advice too, isn't it mother?"

"David, why can't you be serious about anything?"

"Why should I? Dad wasn't."

"Would you stop bringing up your father? He was a good man."

"Sure mother."

"David, I heard something today that you should hear. Do you want to know?"

"Do I have a choice?"

"I don't want to be the one to tell you but. . . Joan is in the hospital."

"I know."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't think that you would care. I don't."

"How can you say that? She is your fiancee."

"That's right mother, she's my fiancee, not yours. Besides, you don't like her anyway. You never have either, so what's with the sudden compassion?"

"David! What's wrong with you? Joan is in the hospital—"

"You still haven't answered my question mother. Why the humanitarian act? Are you trying to make up for the three years of torment I had to go through every time Joan was here? Or now that she's dead, are you trying to make me feel guilty for telling Joan that you hated her?"

"When did she die?"

"What difference does it make?"

"The poor girl, she was only twenty."

"Save the eulogy for the funeral, I'm getting nauseous."

"I'm sorry."

"No you're not."

"David, where are you going?"

"Well, if you must know, I'm going to kill myself."

"Why can't you be serious about anything?"

"I am serious."

II

Mrs. Metzger ends her day the same way she did yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that. She spent hours making herself beautiful only to end up crying. She opens her window to let in fresh air through the night. She raises the shade enough to let the sun in when morning breaks. She sets her alarm and assures herself that she will sleep until it goes off, and not a minute sooner. She settles down; she can't sleep. A factory's whistle disturbs the robins. Mrs. Metzger breathes an unconscious sigh of relief.

"Mom, are you awake? C'mon now, you know what dad always said about sleeping late."

"David, is that really you?"

"Yes it is really me, Joan too."

"I thought you were both dead."

"We are mom, but we thought we should come back to haunt you."

"Mother Metzger, what happened to David's father?"

"I don't have to tell you anything."

"Now mom, what ever happened to, 'That poor girl, she was only twenty.' I thought you were starting to care."

"What do you want?"

"Lies."

"What?"

"Well, you've lied to me ever since I was able to listen to you, so why stop now?"

"David, I never lied to you in all my life, may god be my witness."

"Is she telling the truth now, David?"

"No, that's par for the lifetime, Joan. You still have not answered her question mom, what happened to my father?"

"I don't know, may god be my witness."

"You can do better than that."

"Stop it! Leave me alone!"

"We will if you answer us, may god be our witness. You see mom, I know all about your husband. I found out just before I hung myself. There's no reason to hide the truth anymore. We won't tell anyone, we're dead, remember?"

"C'mon mother Metzger. Consider it a confession. We'll put in a good word for you with god. You believe in god, don't you?"

"Of course I do."

"Prove it mom."

"God forgive me."

"For a minute there, I actually thought we would have to push her. Well, Mrs. David Metzger, now that we are all alone in our new house, what do you think we should do?"

"Well Mr. Metzger, I thought you had everything planned."

III

Mrs. Metzger lies awake waiting for the alarm to go off the same way she does every morning. She watches the sunlight filtering through the trees, through her collection of antique perfume bottles, and onto the walls and ceiling. This natural display comforts her, so does the clamour coming from the robin's nest lodged in the old oak tree just outside her window. This is an ordinary day. Mrs. Metzger and her son, David Jr. are ordinary people.

Mark Pavlovich

Aubade

In Katmandu,

The woman sings her washing song.

She says her man is dead,

But she has sons and life is good.

I, too, sing my washing song:

The sump pump is broken,

The suds-saver no longer saves,

My life is ruined.

Sandra Fredriksen

NIGHTMARE

We never reached the dream within the dream
Though all the time we knew that it was there
Just a few yards ahead across the steam,
And we in bed as though we didn't care.

You put your arms around my naked shoulders
And drew me down to kiss you on the lips;
Your breath smelled bad, your breasts were like dank boulders.
—My dreams, you said, were like your acid trips.

One frightful night with you was quite enough.
I called a taxi shortly after dawn.
You took it angrily and went off in a huff;
And then I thought: My God, the curtains were not drawn!

Peter Russell



Tom

Night Sounds

Floor planks creak—
house just settling
down, deeper down
in bed of sand;
Furnace draft clanks
open, closed,
Pilot light whirls higher, hotter;
Alarm clock tic-le-tic-
tic-le-tic-tic-le-tics,
Beyond the window crickets
chafe their wings together.
Inside molding damp
filters through
blinded, doored room.
Faces, voices
people the recorder,
unwinding reels
of magnetic dialogue,
uncanned laughter—
the rhythm of belonging.
Then one vibration vanishes,
leaving silent gap:
harmony shattered,
the rest amplify in harsh,
piercing streaks
gyrating, telescoping, distorting;
static crackles, then
explodes into pulsing
pain—dull hum—
blood trickles—
the last of the night
sounds,
echoing through
a silent machine.

Joyce Sargent

You 1950
Celluloid liar.
Pumping trivia
Into my innocence.

Rocket manning
Me into fables.
Showing me
Black mumbo evil,
Yellow alien terror,
Red deviled savages.
Spanning the truth,
Penetrating my future,
Twisting my impressions.

And me—
Sitting in my
Twenty-five cent
Center panic.
Trapped in paramount's cave
Of Technicolored laundry,
3-D-ing John Wayne's
Hats and hooves
Of Wisconsin Mac's
Righteousness

Yes you—
With your mortified marquee,
Your mortal menagerie,
Your opus of suds
And sensations,
Sensations of Genocide,
Sensations of holocaust,
Sensations of popcorn.

Now you—
Sit back on your
Melodramatic monologue
Asking me
Of love,
Of value,
Of essence.

Yes, you
Who revolted
At erotica
Between man and woman.
Now you're—telling me
That cowboy and horse
Was not?

CEMETERY CITY

cemetary city is filled with eyes
that cry not,
and see not, and
laugh not.
with closed eyes
I walk
and form sounds
from memory
and forget.

David B. Porter

Why?

Once I find out why,
Then I will understand,
I'll whisper the secret
in your ear,
But you won't be able to hear—
By the time I find out why,
We'll be the stars
that lighten the sky.

Louise A. Loker

Warren Banks



Ruth Deal

PAINTED DESERT, PAINTED SKY

Remember well the eagle's spired course,
His broadening shadow plots the canyon rim;
Recall this spirit when, without remorse,
Machinery and men have stolen him.
Remember well the cactus' sudden bloom;
Recall how once the desert was alive
And how all nature struggled with man's boom
Till all was gone. Now nothing could survive.
Remember well this land, its open space
That rose in rhythm with a seamless blue
Before the sprawl of cities marred its face;
Recall the Colorado's rusty hue—
No more a painted desert, painted sky,
Machinery and men have pumped them dry.

Lawrence Fitzgerald

SOUNDS OF SLEEPLESSNESS

The night, before I sleep
Is filled with feathered sounds
That crawl through air
Like crippled worms.

The bastard hours are orphaned
Within this sleeping room.

The walls are bleeding wolves
And rain clouds gather
In the plaster sky.

Cold rain blisters my flesh.
Lightning chills my skin.
I am alone in the middle of someone.
Alone in the middle of no-one.

I lust for escape,
The sea of dreams.
Freedom comes with the dullness
Of a monocolored chamber.

There I am a leaf
On an everblown tree,
Never alone, never still.

Waiting for me,
The waves of wind are calling—
I go, or am left
To sift the air for freedom.

David B. Porter

can't erase
my last glimpse
of that
abandoned
stray

Lawrence Fitzgerald

and there i was
taxis and cars
splashing up
old snow storms on
my used to be
water-proof coat
but what could i do
run away and miss the bus?
no! i stayed to eat lunch
at a cockroach haven
down the block
around the corner
behind a jail for drunks

i had to walk home then

knock knock
anybody there?
didn't think so
oh well, only three more combinations
and i'm all safe

and there i was
magazines and dishes
sitting on the floor
with my cat who had to be stuffed
eight lives too soon
and the Tube that doesn't really work
but is nice to talk to
but where could i go
far away and hide the truth?
no! i stayed to clean up

without any rules
without any directions
without an idea

Mark Pavlovich

By Myself

LUNAR MOTION DRAWS THE SEA

This winter sea—
such a place
 to contemplate rhythm
in all things.

The cadent pulse
 of waves brings home
the birds' cries
as they course the seascape.

Our balance held in check,
the seeds
 of imagination burst,
bear green shoots.

All space contained, our
rhythm one surge, the moment
bleeds
 & in a mist

gray water meets gray sky.

Lawrence Fitzgerald

It is night,
My friends have left me alone
To sleep on the beach.
My room is a ceiling of stars,
There are no walls
But a gentle breeze surrounds me.
I lay on a bed of uneven sand
No blanket to warm me—
To sleep, sleep, sleep.

When I awake, morning is here!
I see an azure sky, clouds rippling beneath
The glistening sun.
I stretch, I sigh—a new day has begun.
Regret to leave this haven of peace
To step into a bustling world
Of noise, nerves, and neurotics.
Here—the air, the sun, the water
It is all around us to enjoy!
I'll be back soon.

Rose K. Jacobson

WONDER

as a white roof
hangs over the
waterfront
miles of sandy plain
are trip tripping
beneath the
fluid caps

David B. Porter



Mark Mybeck

SPARK

Sometimes,
out of ashes,
one
small
spark
can be salvaged.

One spark
has been known
to warm a cave,
move a mountain,
light a world.

Frances L. Porter

School

says the dictionary
is the Greek word schola
meaning leisure
freetime
to wander the city
visit the docks
see the ships from far away
go out in the country
and through the woods
along the streams and shores
watch people working
in factories and fields
visit libraries churches
museums and stores
look and listen and learn
from all kinds of wandering
minstrels and mountebanks
clowns and sages

school

is supposed to mean
the freedom of the citizen
but Socrates proved too dangerous
so the meaning got changed

John M. Sheehan

I heard a cry
in the jet black
of midnight

From that moment
the stars no longer
twinkled in delight
but shook with fear

Lynn Roeper

Untitled

A door opened
A light flashed
A voice pierced the stillness
 The last minute particles
 of a dream were never revealed
 Incapable of a response
But, yet, aware
 Searching
 Seeking shelter from the bulb's attack
 Finding protection, covered by masses
 Involuntarily losing it by exposer
 Bared
Again the voice
 Harsher
 Now, recognition of the parallel to existence
 —morning—

Kevin C. Thomson

Liquid cat now pours
Himself from chair to table
Top, then back again.

Evelyn Rodgers



Joel Janowski



Faye Kachur

R's SONG

I did not know how much of me had ended
Until I stopped upon that hill to glance
Below. Oh then I saw my heart, unintended,
Lying there in butchered pieces. By chance,
I saw you standing there, alone, and you
Then handed me some star-dust that you'd caught.
You put your arms around me, for you knew
That it was just a thread of hope I sought.
I learned the truth of gentleness from you;
I saw inside your soul, the stock of wheat,
Turning to gold, beside the stone, it grew.
And now as life unfolds, it strikes a beat,
Composed for living. I shall always be,
The one who sings your perfect poetry.

Lonna Fullerton

REVEILLE

Come to the call
To the sound of the war drums pounding
Put it on the line
And see what hidden terrors
Fear unlocks
Dress yourself as befitting
To be presented to deaths guardian
Who's double blade
Swings forward then back
Beheading all who venture near
Draw your sword and slay him
You shall live
Fail and you shall run all your life
With fear and satan's dogs
Forever on your heels
To nip and sever
Forever on your heels

Don Taylor

WINTER FLY

A fly in the kitchen distracts my wife.
Oh foolish fly, now you must deal with me!
But wait, you should have left with summer's green
Maple leaves that have now crumbled and burnt.
Surely this old one commands some respect.
Well, poor fellow, go on, and I'll open
The door a crack to give you a reprieve.
You would have praised such mercy in August.
But it's too cold now, and your friends are dead.
I see, old bug, that you too await death.
You move just quickly enough to hover.
Your wings seem to be tired and fraying.
We were adversaries when we last met
And now fate forces me to kill a friend.
I'll make it fast, but here, another chance!
That's it, go, go and find a companion!
But do not be foolish enough to love.
For death takes pleasure in dissecting it.
Or go alone, and rest in your decayed
Fortress of flowers bathed now in cold sun.
You will surely die, but don't feel cheated
Insignificant as you are, you've lived.

John E. Kolas

i am not lonely
just alone
and there is a difference
to those of us who know
to be alive
does not mean
you are living

Lynn Rooper

In the stillness reaching branches
grasp the bitter skies,
Leaves of crimson and tawny gold
lie scattered on the ground.
People hurry through darkened shadows
to places yet unknown,
And buildings with saddened faces
look to empty streets.
Silence rings . . .
a night in blue.

Karen Gurski



David B. Porter

Cape Coast Castle Revisited

Though you are a continent and two seasons away,
I again wander your once Castle ruins
Remembering now quiet cannons
Facing the same seas,
Which brought my shackled forefathers from those shores
To suffer the foreboding ways of this strange, distant land.

I am drawn deeper
Until the burning, blinding African sun is no more.
Lured
By chilling, centuries-old memories etched into your crumbling innards.
Intrigued
By craggy, winding courses into our haunting histories.

Though I am a continent and two seasons away,
I am chilled and fearful, yet strengthened
Remembering your dank, dark dungeons,
Recognizing your indomitable spirits,
Which have obviously sustained your children's child
To face the still shackling ways of this strange, distant land.

Jo Ann Hall Evans

Giving In

I was lonely to hear your voice again
rasping little accent of moving lips
Wanting not to ruin my body with ache
but to linger in the arms of your love

Doug Norris

I Am, You Are

I am the clay,
You are the sculptor—
make me what you will.
I am the empty canvas,
You are the painter—
color me as you will.
I have but one request
to make of you—
that you will love me
as long as I love you.

Laura Patterson

BENEFACTORS

Calumet National Bank — Nine (9) Convenient Locations

Calumet Campus Shop — Library Building

Scott's Office Supply — 2205 169th Street, Hammond

Ribordy Drugs — 9626 Cline Ave.

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